

AUNT SAREPTA'S GHOST.

BY BLANCHE SHAW.

BEFORE I begin my tale, let me inform my good readers that the ghost in question is not the visible spiritual part of the respected and respectable relative whose name forms the larger part of the title of this article. It was hers only by right of discovery, not by unity of essence.

The prologue over, now to the story. It was Christmas eve, and we were all gathered around the blazing fire in the sitting-room. By all, I mean my father and mother, big sister, and brother Harry, who had just come home for his Christmas holidays, and Aunt Sarepta. As Aunt Sarepta is to be the centre figure of this picture, I think she is entitled to a more particular introduction than the rest, and I will endeavor to place her before you as faithfully as I can. She was a spinster, of such uncertain, or rather impossible age, that no one, not even my father, who was her own brother, could give an opinion on it. My curiosity had prompted me more than once to question him on the subject, and his reply invariably was:

"Sarepta's age! really, my child, I can't say. She was grown up long before months and years had any meaning for me, and—let me see—I don't think I ever heard of her having a birthday. Bless me, child! I don't know how old she is."

So I would leave him, and try to satisfy the keen appetite of my curiosity by the help of mathematics, making my statement thus: Let X = papa's age, and $X + a$ grown girl = Aunt Sarepta's. I have racked my poor brain over this problem remorselessly, but in vain; I never could bring those mystic characters from the vale of the unknown to the clear not-to-be-disputed fact of 1, 2, 3, 4. Her age was as hopelessly lost as the record of dark ages; but her face and form were patent to all; and let me try to do justice to them.

First, we'll take her face—no, we won't, we'll take her cap. That cap of caps which towered as scornfully above all modern millinery as the eagle does above the—duck. It was made of lace; for home wear, black, for company and Sunday,

white. The crown was large, and stood out boldly from her head, displaying beneath it a little knot of carrot-colored hair about the size of a walnut, which was firmly skewered to the back of her head. The cap had a cape, which went around it, met under the chin and hung down almost to her shoulders. It was also of lace, very thin in the main, and letting her neck shine through; but the bottom was trimmed with a broad ruche of scarlet ribbon, which gave her the appearance of a turkey gobbler with his gills flapping. The front was the master-piece, being surrounded by a ruche like the cape, the part at the cheek increasing in size till it looked like two cabbage roses. This was her cap, and next comes her face. Her hair, I have said, was carroty and not very plentiful. Her skin, possibly from a love of harmony, had tried to assume the same hue, and with fair success. Her eyes were gray, neither large nor lustrous, rather sharp, than otherwise. Her nose was remarkable for its faithful adherence to the old Roman type; and her chin was sharp enough to split rocks, as effectually as the beak of that wonderful bird of old was said to do. Her mouth was large, lips thin, and when they opened displayed a row of teeth whose ghastly whiteness reminded one of the tusks of the dragon. This was my aunt's face; and now to her figure. It won't take long, for there was not much of it to speak of, for though it was exceedingly tall and scraggy, it was so lean that the joints of her spine showed painfully through her dress in the summer time, for which reason she always sat upright in her chair, saving thereby bones, dry goods and the upholstery.

This was our aunt as she sat that night, grim as the figure of Fate, a little outside our circle. I said that Harry had just returned from school. Of course he was the lion of the group, which dignity he bore bravely, entertaining us with accounts of school pranks and frolics, of which he was always the hero. We young ones listened with open-mouthed devotion, applauding with such exclamations as "Good, Harry!

"That was right! That was splendid!" whenever an instance of his particular cleverness or bravery was delicately mentioned. The evening passed rapidly away, and at last the clock struck eleven, when Harry, who had been silent a short time, said, suddenly:

"O girls, I did not tell you about the ghost, did I?"

"No!" we both cried in a breath. "A ghost! do tell of it. What is it?"

"That is just what they all ask," said he, "and no one yet has been able to solve the problem. It is a little short stumpy fellow, all white. He goes prowling through the hall as the clock strikes twelve. No one knows where he comes from or where he goes to. They have spoken to it, but it wont answer. One man tried to catch it, but it slipped through his fingers, leaving a blue sulphurous smoke curling around them."

"My good gracious!" we exclaimed, and drew closer together.

Aunt Sarepta looked at Harry severely, and then opening her mouth, so that her white teeth glittered with a ghastliness that made me shiver still more, she said sternly:

"Harry, are you not ashamed to terrify your sisters with such sinful levity?"

"Sinful levity, aunty! I assure you, it is true."

Aunt Sarepta's teeth retreated behind the barrier of her thin pale lips, which arranged themselves in a smile of contemptuous incredulity; and Harry answered with spirit:

"You may laugh as much as you please, aunt, now; but if the ghost should once favor you with a call, I'm afraid you would not think it quite so amusing. Your cry would be, 'O give me the legs of my youth!'"

I am sorry to say that neither Harry's tone nor words were as respectful as the age and dignity of his relative demanded; but the glow and dazzle of "just come home" hung fresh upon him, and besides, the fact of any one having the hardihood to speak in such terms to Aunt Sarepta, so stunned all of us, that, had we felt the inclination, we had not the power to reprove him. But Aunt Sarepta came bravely to her own defence.

"And what do you suppose will be your cry, sir, when you are called to give ac-

count for your shortcomings, to separate your tares from the wheat, eh?—what do you think of that?"

Papa gave Harry a warning look, but the spirit of mischief and opposition was up in him, and he replied:

"I'd stand it as well, aunty, as you would, if you should meet the ghost. Come, tell us what you think you would do."

"I never think on impossibilities. A ghost is one."

"But the witch of Endor?"

"She called up the dead by the help of the Evil One; and should he, by the blackness and depravity of my poor sinful nature, ever gain such dominion over me as to send one of his emissaries into my presence, I would advance boldly to it, seize it with one hand, and, while I held my Bible in the other, bid it, by the Power that cast its master from paradise, to quit my sight."

During this discourse my aunt had articulated freely, going through the acting part of her imaginary triumph with a zest that would have done credit to a Ristori. At the close her arm remained outstretched, and her skinny forefinger pointed at Harry, as though he were, not the presumptuous spirit, but the prince of darkness himself. But, all undaunted, he replied:

"Good, good, aunty! that's the way to fetch them. What do you say to going back with me, and having a tussle with this old codger?—provide yourself with a pair of fire-proof gloves, you know, before you begin. Are you sure, now, that when you came to the scratch, you wouldn't flunk just a little?"

But aunt deigned this irreverent remark no reply; she dropped her arm, and turning to my father, said:

"James, pray, pray in bitterness of spirit for that boy. I see perdition written on his brow. I shall wrestle in spirit for him in my devotions to-night." And with these words, she arose, lighted her candle, and left the room.

Aunt Sarepta's room was a large chamber at the opposite end of the house from that occupied by the other members of the family. It was furnished in a style peculiar to, and very much like herself; one of its features being a heavily curtained bed, to which, in a measure, she was indebted for the match between her hair and skin,

and to which she clung like a knight to his spurs, in spite of the suggestions of her friends, and the orders of her physician. She also had a stove in it, which in winter she kept at a red heat. In my days of wickedness I used to say it was to keep constantly before her a comforting picture of the state of the lost; and also to have herself a little bit in training, if in the end she should discover that she was elected on the wrong side.

I said the room was large. The bed stood at one end, and the stove at the other. Aunt Sarepta went to the stove end, put her candle on a little stand which held her Bible and hymn book, and began to disrobe. First, she took off her cap, and produced a remarkable result of starch and ruffles, called her nightcap. How she ever managed to sleep in that cap is a problem sealed up with her age; the crown must have extended fully six inches beyond her head, and the washerwoman declares she has never once found the starch in it broken. Perhaps she lay on her side, some one will say. No, she could not have done that, for the fluted ruffle set around her face like a row of spikes, that would have worn her meagre cheeks bare in one night's rest, or rather unrest. No, it is useless to investigate. The thing is a mystery, a hopeless, helpless mystery, and I give it up. Aunt Sarepta proceeded to put on this cap; but just as she held the string beneath her chin, she sneezed. Now a sneeze to Aunt Sarepta was a serious thing, for in its "hollow sound" she heard "cold, influenza, rheumatic pains, mustard drafts and cold weak tea," brought up by a frowsy servant. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." So thought Aunt Sarepta. She laid the cap aside with a sigh, and took from a bureau drawer a large square piece of red flannel, which she wrapped and rolled around her head several times, and finally tied under her chin. This done to her satisfaction, she said to herself:

"I guess I'll steam my feet; that generally takes out influensy."

She looked into the kettle that was boiling on the stove, and saw it held water enough for the operation; she brought out her foottub and mustard, and prepared the bath. She then finished disrobing herself, and put a short calico sack and yellow flannel petticoat over her nightdress; she

next took a patchwork quilt, in which a green eagle was represented surrounded by huge red hearts and livers, in tantalizing proximity to his beak, from the press. She put this over the chair, and then drew it close to the fire, seated herself, rolled the quilt tightly around her, plunged her feet into the water, and began to steam.

O that some poor but talented artist, unseen, could have sketched my aunt as she sat there! The flannel bound tightly around her brow, her nose standing out grandly, and the sharp angles of her knees threatening to come through the quilt and separate the eagle's head from his body. She sat a few minutes gazing into the fire, ever and anon nodding her head as if in approval of her thoughts, till at length she put out her hand, and, taking her hymn book from the stand, she began to read.

Now when Aunt Sarepta read her hymn book, she was always powerfully exercised; and when powerfully exercised, she always gave audible vent to her feelings. Consequently, she read her hymns in a monotonous half-crying voice, dwelling louder or longer on those words that particularly comforted or distressed her. This night, "When I can read my title clear" seemed the balm most blessed to her need. She read it over several times, and was dwelling with unusual energy on the line "Then I can smile at Satan's rage," when a sound behind her caused her to look around, and by the faint light of the flickering dip she beheld a sight that froze the blood in her veins and the words on her lips. The curtains of her bed were parted, and in the opening stood a frightful thing, all snow-white except the eyes, which, like two glowing coals, were fixed upon her. Aunt Sarepta stiffened and grew cold, froze fast to her chair; she could not move, speak, or even turn her head away from that frightful gaze, which seemed piercing her through and through.

"Where! where was Roderick," or rather Roderick's courage, then? Her Bible lay close beside her on the stand, but no hand was outstretched to seize it. It was powerless even to hold the hymn book, which dropped from her fingers into the foottub with a loud splash. The noise seemed to arouse the horrid thing. It moved its head from side to side, and then, O horror of horrors! it slid to the floor, and walked with slow and solemn step

straight to Sarepta. Nearer and nearer it came, its eyes glowing, its mouth open, showing its ghastly teeth and fiery tongue. A few steps from her he paused, looked at her with a fiendish grin, and then slowly swung into view a long tail. O heaven above! it was the Evil One come to seize her for her sinful boasting. The fumes of brimstone already filled her nostrils. With one wild yell she sprang from her seat, upsetting both the foottub and the kettle of boiling water which sat beside her, and whose contents fell over her naked feet. The pain brought forth another yell, but at that moment the thing again approached, uttering low growls, and she plunged forward, to trip over the dragging quilt, and fall headlong on the floor, while the demon, with a cry of triumph, sprang on her prostrate body, and lapped her face with his tongue. Shriek after shriek burst from Sarepta as she struggled with her enemy, who now uttered sharp cries and lashed her with his tail.

"O Lord, have mercy on me, lost sinner! Help! help! Will no one save me from the fiend? Save me! save me from the lake of fire!"

At this moment the door burst open, and the household, headed by my father, ap-

peared. "What is the matter?" all cried in one voice; but no answer came. My aunt had committed the only weakness ever known of her; she had fainted. As the door opened; the thing had left her and stood in the shade; but the moment it saw Harry it ran to him and sprang upon him.

"Why, halloo, Foxy!" he cried. "How did you come here?" And then he burst out laughing. My mother, who had been leaning over my aunt, looked up severely.

"I can't help it, mother, indeed I can't; but Aunt Sarepta has seen a ghost. It is too good! I brought that dog as a present to father. I did not want to show it until to-morrow, and it seems he has got in here, and played ghost for Aunt Sarepta. O, it is too good! The Douglass vanquished in his hall! Up, Fox!" And Fox rose on his hindlegs and walked gravely to the side of his victim. The effect was irresistible, and, in spite of the senseless form on the floor, the room rang with laughter. Aunt Sarepta revived under the proper treatment, but her scalds were very severe, and kept her a prisoner a long time. On her recovery two changes were noticeable in her tastes: the banishment of her bed-curtains, and a reticence on the subject of ghosts.

AUNT DREW'S LEGACY.

BY MARY L. BOLLES BRANCH.

CHAPTER I.

ONE narrow purple-stained window, swung halfway round on its centre to let in the air, looked as if it opened right among boughs and green leaves, for behind the church the tall elms grew. Jean Argyle, raising her head after her first silent prayer, glanced over that way at once for a look out into the treetops. She was earlier than the rest of the choir that morning, although the bell had almost done ringing when she passed up the stairs and through the little side door into the gallery. Only the organist Mr. Siebert was there, and he did not notice her. For his head was resting dreamily on his hand. All the influences from without were holy and quieting as she looked up among the tall columns and arches, and over at the wonderful great chancel window, and then again at her own favorite purple one, with the cool, dark, silent depths of foliage behind.

The people were gathering below, the bell ceased ringing, and the organist began a low sweet voluntary. Jean heard Charlie Thrall, the tenor, come quietly to his place, and a moment after some one stumbled over a footstool; that was Orrin Drew, she was sure, but she never turned her head until a graceful little figure in fluttering muslin knelt for an instant beside her, and then, rising, whispered briskly in her ear:

"See, Jean; see those bonnet-strings! Aren't they lovely? Just the new shade."

"Where?" asked Jean, looking over the rail.

"Those pink ones. Too lovely for anything! Where do you suppose she got them?"

"What's the matter, Clem?" inquired Orrin Drew, in a loud whisper.

"Hush! Dr. Rawley is looking up at us."

The voluntary ceased, and the rector's voice followed:

"The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him."

The color flew into Jean's face. She rose hurriedly with the rest, and opened her prayer-book. Clementina Drew shook out the folds of her lace handkerchief, and

contentedly resumed her examination of bonnets, but Jean felt a little uneasy and abashed, as if she had somehow disturbed the harmony of things.

"And yet I did not whisper very much," she thought to herself; "but it always spoils everything. I'll begin Sunday over again with the Venite, and not look at Clem after that."

Whoever in the congregation had glanced up at the singers during the next chant, might only have noticed how bright and young the faces were of the two girls standing side by side, never guessing how thoughtlessly and lightly the clear soprano ran up the high notes, nor how honestly and earnestly the alto sang.

Clementina Drew and Jean Argyle were cousins, of the same age, with the same pursuits, and interested in the same things, but with a difference. Jean was very sensitive to outer influences; a picture, a tree could set her soul in tune, and a whisper could jar it again, but Clementina was never moved by such things. Jean acted as yet much more from impulse than principle, and so did Clementina, but the latter's impulses were more purely thoughtless.

When Mr. Siebert formed his choir, assisted by the advice of Mrs. Marlowe, the rector's sister, he told that lady he hoped his singers might have souls to interpret music loftily and truly. She comprehended him, and arched her fine eyebrows a little, as she answered:

"They have souls, and they have musical voices, but whether these help each other is more than I can say, Mr. Siebert. Your soprano, I imagine, will airily elude your suggestions, but Jean Argyle's fancy is like morning-glory vines, very easily trained; give it but the least clue to hold by, and you'll find a soul there to interpret, I think."

"And my young men?" asked Mr. Siebert.

"Unwrought material. Try your hand upon it. You have our four best voices; do what you can with them."

So at the first rehearsal he told them they were to sing the Benedicite, and said

he never heard that without remembering the old tradition, which tells us that it was sung by three holy men while they walked unharmed through the fiery furnace, praising God.

"Try to imagine that while you sing," he said, "and it will put praise in your voices."

And when he had selected an anthem, he told them the history of the man who had set its sublime words to music, and then he played it through upon the organ, with loving lingering touch, asking them if they could not detect in the notes the experience of the composer's soul.

The sexton's little son, who blew the organ, went home that night and told his mother it was as good as a story to hear the new man talk. And so the choir thought, also; but when Sunday came, his words were only half remembered.

Service being over, the girls lingered a little, while the congregation passed out below. Mrs. Marlowe looked up at them with a cordial little nod, and Mr. Siebert, when he rose at last from the organ and closed his score-book, said:

"You have done fairly well, my children, and now we will always try to do our best, and to make that best better."

CHAPTER II

"COME home to dinner with me," said Jean Argyle to Clementina, as they descended the narrow stairs from the choir-loft; "then you will see Aunt Drew. She came last night and took us all by surprise."

"Aunt Drew! I haven't seen her since I was a child," said Clementina, "and then she gave me a great gold locket. Lives in St. Louis, don't she? I have always had a fau-cy that she would come to our rescue sometime, like Cinderella's god-mother. We're eighteen, Jean; it's time for something to happen to us."

Jean was silent. She was thinking how Aunt Drew had hinted pretty plainly that she should like to take some one young and bright home with her to pass the winter. Jean wished that she could go. Aunt Drew—St. Louis! the mere words seemed to stand for gayety, and luxury, and so much that was inviting.

Aunt Drew was a childless widow, with

ample fortune, who much preferred living in the city, in which her most brilliant days had been spent, to returning to the little town where all her relatives were. Therefore, she made them only rare brief visits. In society she took a leading place among the worldly and fashionable, while in private life she was so full of whims and caprices that scarcely any one had patience to bear with her. She was Jean's own aunt, and had married Clementina's uncle, which was why the girls playfully called themselves cousins.

"I never know quite how to get along with Ann," said Mrs. Argyle, referring to her sister. "She always used to order me about when we were children, and I am afraid of her even yet."

"I'm sure I can't understand how Jane," said Mrs. Drew, referring to Mrs. Argyle, "can possibly go on living such a vapid colorless life, and be such a washed-out faded woman! I want to take her and give her a shaking!"

And to the girl Jean, full of visions and longing for a change, home-life did seem a little tiresome and colorless, while her Aunt Drew, with her splendid silks, and jewels, and wonderful descriptions of gay city life, appeared to her inexperienced eyes like one whose cup held the richest wine of life. Jean, like too many young girls, had not yet learned to appreciate the tender beauty of her mother's worn face, and the pathos of her tired eyes and gentle smile. It seemed to her that life would be a great deal easier and pleasanter where the children could not come fretting and disturbing her, and where she would not always be called off to some bit of hard work just as she was composing herself for a quiet hour of reading, or just as she was making great resolutions about a noble future. For Jean was really groping about for a clue to the higher ends of existence, and she thought she could make her life like a knight's life, noble, loyal and devoted to grand purposes, if she only were not always interrupted by something disagreeable just as she was beginning.

"And in Aunt Drew's beautiful house," she thought, "I could have so much quiet and leisure, with nothing to jar. I could be refined and gentle, and see the world, and have a good influence. O, I do hope she will take me home with her!"

Aunt Drew called the two girls up to her

room when she heard them coming in from church that Sunday noon. She was dressing for dinner, and her trunk was half unpacked, its contents lying strewn over the bed and chairs. Clem's quick eye did not fail to notice the dainty texture of the laces, the stiff richness of the silks, the subdued gorgeousness of the India shawl, and the pretty French caps, handkerchiefs and ornaments, that lay about in full sight. Aunt Drew smiled inwardly as she noted the effect.

"Two remarkably pretty girls my nieces are," she thought to herself. "I must certainly take one of them and bring her out." And then she said, aloud, "Here, girls, do help me, or I shall be late. Clementina, will you pour some *eau de heliotrope* on this lace handkerchief? And, Jean, I want you to arrange my hair a little; these puffs on the side, I mean."

Jean had just taken the tortoise-shell comb in her hand, when her mother's voice called at the foot of the stairs:

"Jean dear, I want you a minute."

"I must go," said Jean, a little regretfully. "Maybe I can come back in a minute, auntie; but if I can't, Clemmie can arrange the puffs."

"O yes, let me!" said Clem, quickly. "I know just how you want them, aunt." And having really a great knack at hair-dressing, she went to work like a French maid, while Aunt Drew surveyed her own head in the mirror with satisfaction.

"You have done it beautifully, child," she said at last; "and there is the dinner-bell this minute. You may lay that shawl over my shoulders, and we will go down together."

After dinner Aunt Drew took the girls up into her room again with her, and good-naturedly allowed them to examine her trinkets, bestowing a ring upon Jean, and a pretty pin upon Clementina. Meanwhile she questioned them about their home and school life, their likes and dislikes, their hopes and wishes, and the girls chatted away with perfect unreserve.

All at once the clear sound of the church bell was heard, and Jean started.

"O, it is time to go to Sunday school!" she exclaimed. "We shall have to hurry, Clemmie."

"Sunday school!" said Aunt Drew, shrugging her shoulders. "But I have a very different plan from that, my dears.

Sit down here by me till you have finished your pretty stories about yourselves, and then, as I have a little headache, I will lie down on that comfortable lounge, while you, Jean, shall read me to sleep as you did last night. Never mind Sunday school to-day. Indeed, you are too old to go."

"O auntie, I'll read to you when I come back!" said Jean, eagerly. "But this is our Bible-class that Dr. Rawley has just formed, and he is *very* anxious for us all to be there. You don't know how good he is."

"Much better than I am, I don't doubt," said her aunt, coldly. "Very well, Jean, take your choice."

"O auntie, it isn't like a choice!" exclaimed poor Jean, reddening and speaking rapidly; "but we *promised* him we would be there, and he spoke so beautifully to us about it, I feel as if I wouldn't break my promise for the world. And I will be back in two hours, and read to you all the rest of the day."

"I am not so exacting," said Aunt Drew. "Go, by all means, Jean. How is it with you, Clementina? Are you, too, so very pious that you cannot spare a little time to your poor old aunt?"

"O, I'd just as soon stay here with you as not," answered Clementina, quickly. "I don't mind missing Bible-class just for once."

So she nestled down comfortably on an ottoman by Aunt Drew's side, while Jean, feeling embarrassed and almost hurt, hurriedly put on her things, seized her Bible, and started.

"She might know I would like to stay with her," thought Jean, tearfully, as she sped along; "but I couldn't bear to disappoint dear old Dr. Rawley, when he talks so kindly to me, too, and is helping me to try to be good."

The Sunday school was so large that Dr. Rawley had been obliged to take his class into the robing-room. Jean arrived just at the last moment before the introductory service, and lent her sweet clear voice to the singing of the hymns. Then came the lesson, the sacred beatitudes, and the good old rector dwelt with fervor on the promised blessings.

"I wonder what he will say about 'the meek,'" thought Jean. "I can understand a little about the other blessings, but I never could see how the meek are to 'in-

herit the earth,' unless it is after the end of the world."

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Dr. Rawley spoke of the beauty of meekness, and how pleasing it is in the sight of God. And then he remembered a passage which had delighted him once in one of old Isaac Walton's books. Walton said that in his quiet morning walk to the river each day, he was accustomed to pass through the garden, park and woodland of a wealthy neighbor. He told with what intense enjoyment he heard, as he walked, the singing of the birds, the whispering of the leaves, the plash of the brook; how he lingered where the sunshine sifted down through the tree-tops and made pretty dappled carpets of the moss; how he caught the gleam of the dew on the grass-blades, and the wholesome smell of the fresh earth. He had no vaulting ambition nor sordid cares to fret his soul; he felt no enmity towards anything came between him and these beautiful works of God. The owner of park and woodland, a man burdened with wealth and ambition, was in the city, in Parliament, now here, now there, and rarely spent more than a few days each year on this estate. Thinking of these things, it occurred to Walton that he himself, a humble quiet man, was more in possession of these beautiful grounds than their proud owner, and so there dawned on him the comprehension of one way, at least, in which the meek may inherit the earth.

"How lovely!" thought Jean. "I can really catch a little idea out of that to live by. It makes me feel almost rich."

She sped homeward after the class separated, feeling bright and happy, and richly repaid for going. Mr. Siebert walked with her for a few rods.

"It was beautiful," he said; "it was like a pastoral symphony."

Jean's first thought on reaching home was to read to Aunt Drew; but that lady told her Clementina had entertained her so well that she did not care to hear reading just then, and as she was rather tired she believed she would take a nap, so the girls might draw the curtains and leave her.

"And remember, Clementina," she said, as they were going, "tell your mother I will come to her house to-morrow and finish my visit with her, for I shall return to St. Louis on Tuesday."

CHAPTER III.

AUNT DREW went to Clementina's early Monday, but in the evening they both came round to the Argyles to say good-by, Clementina as radiant as the sun, for her aunt had invited her to go to St. Louis with her to pass the winter.

"O, it's splendid!" she whispered to Jean. "And she has given me a lovely Roman sash, and she is going to take me just as I am, and get new dresses for me in St. Louis. We are going to-morrow morning early in the train."

"Yes," said Aunt Drew, speaking to Mrs. Argyle; "you know I said I wanted some bright young person with me this winter, and Clementina is just the one to suit me perfectly. I want some one I can depend upon to be with me at all times whenever I wish." And here she threw a meaning look at Jean.

Jean's heart sank. Such a great chance to have come so near, and she to have missed it! But she controlled her voice to its usual pleasant tones as she congratulated Clem, and wished them both a happy winter.

"Have you done anything to displease your aunt, Jean?" asked Mrs. Argyle, when their visitors had gone. And then Jean told her mother of what had passed Sunday afternoon.

"I am sorry for you, dear, but never mind," said her mother, with a little sigh. "I should have liked you to have the change, and to see more of life; but it is all for the best, no doubt, and we could hardly have spared you. Hark! there's Robbie crying up stairs. Can you go to him, dear?"

Jean went up rather slowly. It was hard to stay at home to quiet the children instead of spending the winter in St. Louis. She found Robbie awake in his little bed, and crying because he was afraid of the dark. She sat down by him to soothe him, but her mind wandered, and Robbie detected it with indignation.

"You aint half good, Jeanie!" he said, restlessly. "I'm 'fraid of you, too."

Jean laughed, and some of her old light-heartedness came back with the laugh. She took the child in her arms to the window.

"O Robbie," she said, "how could you feel lonesome or think it was dark when you had such bright company up in the

sky? See how all the stars are winking at you. There's a great hunter up there looking at you."

"What's his name?" demanded Robbie.

"His name is Orion. See those three stars in a row; they are his belt, and the little cluster at one end is his sword. He has gone out to hunt a great wild bull."

"How big a bull?"

"He weighs seven thousand tons. See that pretty triangle of stars; they are the bull's head. And following after Orion is his faithful dog; there he is right back of Orion's feet, and his name is Big Canis. And the dog had a little brother dog that he left at home named Little Canis; but Little Canis wanted to go to the hunt, too, so he called the horse out of the stable and jumped on his back, and there they go as fast as they can after all the rest. Lullaby! lullaby! Why, Rob, you're asleep!"

She laid the little fellow back in his warm bed, and then went to the window again, for there was comfort there for her, too. The bright, white, steadfast stars seemed to look down into her very soul.

"How peace-compelling they are!" she thought, almost wishing it could be forever starlight. But to-morrow would come with its cares, and the children who looked so sweet, and rosy, and innocent now on their pillows, would be having no end of childish troubles, and the chimney would smoke, and it would be ironing-day, and while she was getting hot and tired, there would be Clementina, all in her Sunday best, speeding away in the cars with Aunt Drew to St. Louis.

"He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names."

Jean thought of this as she still stood looking up into the sky, and with it she remembered that other passage wherein we are told that "He heedeth even the sparrow's fall."

"I feel like a poor little sparrow myself," she said, with half a smile and half a sigh, as she turned to go down stairs.

Aunt Drew and Clementina went as agreed upon. The days and weeks slipped quietly along into the very heart of winter. Jean found herself very busy with home duties, and one or two studies she was trying to keep up. "This is mere drilling," she said to herself, not knowing she was already in the edge of the battle. Her treats were rehearsal nights and Sundays.

Clementina's going had left a vacancy in the choir which Mrs. Marlowe now filled with her well-trained voice, saying, pleasantly, that her day was almost over, but they might have the gleanings of it, till some fresh young prima donna was found to delight them. She followed Mr. Siebert's lead zealously, and knew so many beautiful anthems and rare old compositions in sacred music, fragments of which she would give them sometimes after rehearsal, Mr. Siebert accompanying her with the organ, that the rest were roused to enthusiasm, too, and it was noticed that the singing at St. James constantly improved.

"What do you hear from Miss Clementina?" Charlie Thrale asked Jean one evening.

"I haven't heard for some time, but she is having a very gay winter, I believe," said Jean. "What does she write to you about it, Orrin?"

"O, Clem never writes to me at all," said Orrin, bluntly. "Mother had a letter last week, and she said she was well and enjoying herself. Jean, it's raining, and you haven't any umbrella. I'll take you home under mine, if you like."

"I'm going to start off myself pretty soon," remarked Orrin, in his brusque way, as they walked along. "It's time I was getting into business somewhere. I want to be an engineer or a mechanic."

"I suppose you're destined for something of that sort," said Jean, laughing. "Don't you remember when we were children, you were always making little miniature saw-mills, and cog-wheels, and tiny steam-boats?"

"Yes; and I should like to be an inventor, too."

"Then you don't feel any desire for a profession?" asked Jean, half wonderingly.

"No; I'm just the fellow for hard work, with muscle as well as brain. I feel at home among workmen and machinery more than anywhere else. And I've been talking with Dr. Rawley; maybe you'll wonder at that, Jean, but he is a good old man, and he made me feel as if I ought to be out in the world doing my part."

"O, I am so glad you have talked with him!" said Jean, earnestly; "and I am sure I wish you success with all my heart. Why, here we are at the door! Thank

you, Orrin, for your company, and good-night."

Very shortly after that Orrin went out into the busy world to seek his fortune, and so another vacancy was made in the choir, which Mr. Siebert supplied with one of his own countrymen, a stolid-looking German basso, who sang as naturally as he breathed.

"This is a real pleasant winter, after all," said Jean, as she stood one day at the table fluting the ruffles on her baby sister's dress. "I know I shall always love to remember it, it has been so peaceful and satisfying. I wonder if life will keep going on the same way?"

"I never knew it to," said Mrs. Argyle.

It did not then. When Mr. Argyle came home that evening, he brought the tidings of Aunt Drew's death. She had died suddenly at her home in St. Louis, from the effects, it was supposed, of an over-dose of opium, self-administered during severe neuralgia pain. Her body was to be brought among her relatives for burial, and would probably arrive the next day, Clementina coming also. This news was a shock to them all. Mrs. Argyle wept for the sister who had loved her but little, and Jean went soberly about the house, realizing, for almost the first time in her life, how near death may be to every one of us.

"I wonder if your sister left a will?" said Mr. Argyle to his wife that night.

"I don't know," she replied, a little anxiously. "Ann was very eccentric, you know, and may have made some strange disposition of her property."

Mr. Argyle relapsed into grave thought. He was a poor bookkeeper, with a small salary, working day in and day out, and it is not to be wondered at if it occurred to him what a help some of Aunt Drew's wealth would be.

CHAPTER IV.

AUNT DREW's will? Yes, she had made a will, and its contents made quite a commotion. It was dated within a week after her return to St. Louis.

First, she had directed that her plate and clothing should be divided between her sister and sister-in-law. Then she left a large bequest to a widow's home. There were legacies of more or less value to various friends, and finally she bequeathed to

Clementina Drew, her "beloved niece," fifty thousand dollars, without condition, and the house she owned in St. Louis. Then followed this singular clause:

"To my niece Jean Argyle I do not leave any property in her own right, but, as I have reason to believe this will please her more, I give to her in trust the sum of fifty thousand dollars, to be expended by her exclusively for church purposes, this expenditure to be complete within the term of three years from the time of her entering upon said trust."

When Jean heard this portion of the will her heart thrilled with a fine excitement, for here at last was a high duty to perform, a lofty mission to fulfil. But glancing around she noticed her mother's sad patient face, and the disappointment in her father's eyes, and slowly the latent malice in Aunt Drew's legacy smote upon her.

"I think it is downright shameful!" whispered Clem, sympathetically.

How Jean could have relieved her care-burdened father, her self-denying mother; how she could have educated Robbie and set him up in business; what advantages she could have given her little sisters, if that money had only been bestowed upon her free of condition, to dispose of as she pleased! But instead here was this onerous burden laid upon her, and all because she had not stayed at home with Aunt Drew that Sunday afternoon.

There was a decided discontent among the Argyles, and no wonder. Clem and her mother were well enough satisfied, for their parts, and departed at once for St. Louis, there to make their permanent residence. The terms of the will became generally known, and there was a great deal of gossip all through the town about Jean Argyle and her "estate in trust."

As for Jean, she sought good old Dr. Rawley for sympathy and advice. What was she to do? What steps should she take, and where should she bestow the money? She felt impulsively that it would be better to have done with it at once, and to settle quietly down into the old home routine again, forgetting as far as possible Aunt Drew's legacy.

But Dr. Rawley did not counsel haste. He reminded Jean that, whatever the circumstances that had apparently brought this burden upon her, there was a divine power behind and above it all, shaping a

work for her to do, and giving her a good opportunity for good. He restored in some measure the glow of enthusiasm she had felt on first hearing the will, tempered, however, with a much greater appreciation of the difficulties before her. By his advice Jean determined to wait two full years before making a decided disposition of the funds, and in that time to consider the subject carefully and prayerfully, hoping to be guided to give help where it was most needed.

And now Jean became a "newspaper item," to her great dismay. Brief paragraphs, detailing the singular bequest to church uses, left to the caprice of a young girl, floated from one paper to another. The story was caught at by agents, by missionaries, by struggling ministers, and by sisterhoods and benevolent enthusiasts. Circulars began to pour in upon Jean, and begging letters, some almost commanding, and others pitifully entreating her to give to this or that deserving object. Such a world of distressing need, in forms she had never dreamed of, opened before her, and her ready sympathy flowed out to each new call, though they bewildered her terribly, for what were fifty thousand dollars among so many, and how was she ever to be wise enough to know where to give? It was a great relief that she had promised Dr. Rawley to wait two years. And this was the reply she sent to each appeal, that she could take no step in the matter for two years.

But though this might postpone the momentous decision, it could not prevent a weight of thought and care falling upon the girlish shoulders, and it seemed as if a great wall were rising between her and the light-hearted past. Just as though there were not work and anxiety enough at home, she could not help thinking sometimes, to keep her steady and discipline her.

"What are you thinking of now, child?" asked Mrs. Marlowe, as she came in one afternoon and found Jean in a brown study by the window, with three or four letters in her lap.

"Well," said Jean, putting the letters away, "St. Barnabas, a thousand miles away, wants a bell, and St. Mary, as far in another direction, requests an organ of me. I don't so much mind these, but here are two young men, brothers, who write asking me to send them to college, and educate

them for the ministry. Now do you suppose it is my duty? It is a very eloquent letter, but how do I know that they are at all suitable, or called to the work?"

"Of course you don't know," said Mrs. Marlowe, decisively. "Give them the same answer as the rest, and don't trouble over it till the two years are up. Meanwhile, get your bat, for I am going to take you home with me to tea."

So Jean went away with her friend to spend one of those pleasant evenings at the rectory which always gave her "a fresh start," she said. Dr. Rawley's face always wore a kindly look for her, like an unfailing benediction. He was growing feeble now, and a young deacon had been called to assist him in some of his labors. And if this young deacon looked favorably upon Jean's bright face, and if he sometimes wondered, as far as he conscientiously could, whether, in case she married a clergyman, the legacy might properly be devoted to a parsonage and a theological library, Jean in her innocence never suspected it.

"I heard from Orrin Drew to-day," said Dr. Rawley, as he joined them in the parlor after tea.

"O, did you?" exclaimed Jean. "I wish he were here to sing with us this evening. How he used to like this anthem of 'The shield, the sword, and the battle.'" She was turning over some sheets of music as she spoke.

"Yes," continued the doctor, "Orrin is doing well, I think. He shows great resolution, and will soon be a master-mechanic. That great establishment at Lowbury for building engines, where he works, employs five hundred men."

"I have been there," said Mrs. Marlowe; "it is one of the queerest places you ever saw. The junior partner in that establishment is a connection of ours. He gets his finger very black drawing circles, though why he draws them and why he uses his finger, is more than I can tell. Come and try this new song with me, Jean; it has a very fine alto."

So they turned to music, and music ended the evening, and when the evening was over the young deacon walked home with Jean.

Time rolled on.

"Mamma," said Clementina Drew, as she sat one morning at her late breakfast, languidly toying with the grotesque little china cup that held her chocolate, "mamma, it is nearly two years since Aunt Drew died, and in all that time I have never had Jean Argyle here to visit me. I am going to invite her to pass the rest of the winter with us. I wonder how she looks now-a-days; she used to be pretty."

"It is well enough to ask her to come," replied Mrs. Drew. "I don't suppose the poor child has much pleasure. I wonder if she has disposed of that provoking legacy yet?"

"No; I've heard about that," said Clementina. "Old Dr. Rawley advised her to wait as long as she could. I am glad he did, for I have a plan of my own about it."

But what the plan was Clementina would not tell, though Mrs. Drew was mildly curious.

So the invitation went forth, and now Jean had her chance at last to visit in the great city.

"She shall go," said both Mr. and Mrs. Argyle. "It is time she had a change."

The firm which employed Mr. Argyle had recently been so fortunate as to treble their business, and had not forgotten at the same time to enlarge their bookkeeper's salary, so that he could really afford to let his daughter have a little vacation. Thus the two girls were to be together again, to call each other Jean and Clem as of old, and to study in each other's faces the changes that two years had wrought.

"Well, I'm sure, Jean, you look as fresh as a daisy," said Clementina, the morning after Jean's arrival, as they sat together in a dainty little boudoir, "modest, and crimson-tipped, and all that. I thought you would be completely fagged out by this time, staying at home tending babies and washing dishes."

"O, I don't mind those things as much as I used to," said Jean, with a bright smile, "and I really enjoy being with the children. Then I have had my lessons and music, you know."

"Dear me, what a goodyish sound that has!" exclaimed Clem, in a tone of light mockery. "But there, dear, I won't make fun of you. Lessons and music! I took, perhaps, six lessons in French after I came

here, but when it came to verbs I stopped short off, they were so much trouble. Aunt Drew didn't care; it was before she died. She had translations of all the French novels, and said there was no use in reading them in the original. She used to lie on a divan every day after dinner and make me sprinkle her with rose-water, and then read her to sleep with a novel."

"Did she?" asked Jean, who was longing to know what Clem's life had been with city privileges. "Of course she wanted you part of the time, but I suppose you had your mornings to yourself?"

"Not an hour!" said Clem, with energy. "She scarcely ever let me be out of her sight, and at night I slept in a little room off hers where she could call me. She was afraid to be alone. O, you have no conception! Sometimes I have taken down her hair and put it up again a dozen times in one day. What I say now is, that I went through enough penance and self-sacrifice that winter to do for a lifetime, so I owe no more to the world, and now I propose to have a good time. Still, I make no complaint; she was very good to me, and took me wherever she went. Before I had been here two months I had six elegant silk party-dresses, and then she gave me all her jewelry. We went to a great many parties; the old people played cards, and the young people danced. Sometimes I used to think of you right in the midst of a waltz, and of how slight a chance had saved me from plodding along in the old way with you, singing in the choir, and going to sewing-bees and sociables."

"I would not exchange my two years for yours, Clem," she said; and she said it sincerely.

"Nor exchange legacies, either?" asked Clem, with a shrewd glance and a shrug of her shoulders.

"No, nor legacies either," said Jean, with the thoughtful look which had become frequent with her settling down upon her face.

"Have you done anything with the fifty thousand dollars yet?"

"No. A great many suggestions have been made to me, but one by one I have dismissed most of them from my mind; a few remain to be decided upon at the last moment. If I do not feel satisfied with my own judgment, I shall place the funds in the hands of Dr. Rawley, which will be in

a manner giving them to the church to dispose of herself."

"O, but that won't do at all!" exclaimed Clem, with vivacity. "I have a much better plan than that, by which you may give the money for church purposes, and at the same time be benefited by it yourself. By the way, Jean, I have invited a few friends of mine to drop in this evening, not at all in a formal way, you know, but so that you may begin to make acquaintances. Don't you think my parlors are lovely to receive guests in? Almost everything is as Aunt Drew left it; she had a great passion for frescoes and bronzes. But I have had the furniture upholstered over with light blue satin, which is much more cheerful than her wine-colors."

Parting the heavy damask curtains that shut off the little boudoir by itself, Clementina took Jean into the parlors to admire their beauties and curiosities at her leisure, while she herself went up stairs to make an elaborate *negligé* toilet, "for perhaps some one might call."

That evening the "few friends" dropped in as Clementina had announced. Their hostess met them, attired in a light silk of one of the most fashionable shades, "mignonette green," and wearing Aunt Drew's antique set of gold and emeralds. She looked very graceful, very stylish, and quite the "blonde belle," as some of her friends called her. Jean, who had but two silk dresses in the world, on being informed by Clementina that this evening would be as nothing compared to others that awaited her, thought it best to wear her black one, as many a heroine has done before her. Thus, in black, with a pearl pin, and not a crimp in her hair, she was quite a contrast to Clementina, who regarded her with some misgivings at first, not knowing whether she would seem to her guests like a simple little rustic, or whether she had that "inexpressible something" beyond all mere style, and superior to it.

"But I found out pretty quick," she said, in speaking of it afterwards. "Jean was as quiet and cool as a bit of starlight, and when one gentleman after another praised her manners to me, I began to think that the other young ladies and I myself were nothing but fluttering bunches of ribbons and curls, after all. But her singing was the triumph of the evening. Who would ever have thought of her giving

us a solo from an oratorio! I sang in my best style an opera air or two, and some of those pretty love-ballads that the prima donnas keep for their encores. Then on being urged to take my place at the piano, she said very quietly that she knew none but sacred music, and upon that she gave us a wonderful solo from the 'Messiah,' and afterwards an anthem! That Mr. Siebert and Mrs. Marlowe have really done great things with her voice. Why, all my gentlemen friends went into a perfect enthusiasm about her! If she stays here the season through, I don't know but she will get an offer from every one of them, and it wasn't at all in my plan that she should get one. The Rev. Mr. Sterrett *did* look as if he thought her almost an angel, that's a fact!"

To Jean herself the evening had passed very enjoyably, the unwonted excitement and the delicate compliments she received exhilarated her. She did not feel the slightest awkwardness or consciousness—people with a definite object in life seldom do—and Aunt Drew's legacy had been a real benefit to Jean in giving her thoughts a broad channel and a most unselfish aim. She was interested in meeting a young clergyman among Clem's guests, who, though rather boyish-faced and of limited experience, seemed to be well educated and a zealous worker. Jean's mind at this time turned so much to church matters, that she was glad to talk with any one who could make her better acquainted with her subject. Just now she was specially intent on church architecture, and on making estimates as to how good a building could be erected for fifty thousand dollars, in case she should so decide to use the money, in behalf of some poor parish. Here the Rev. Mr. Sterrett could help her, and even in this very first evening they arrived at a friendly understanding, with a promise on his part to call the next day with a book of architectural designs for her to examine.

When Clementina heard of this she clapped her hands. Jean told her that same night as they were taking down their hair.

"Just what I wanted!" she exclaimed, gayly; "I knew you would like Arthur Sterrett, and I knew he would like you. It is all happening just right. Why, don't you see yourself with your two gray eyes

that he is the very man you ought to marry, and then you can keep Aunt Drew's legacy, after all?"

"What in the world do you mean, Clementina?" said Jean, confounded by this hurried march of thought.

"Well, I will tell you," said Clem, sitting down and becoming explanatory; "I have always felt worried about Aunt Drew treating you so in her will, and always wished you could have the money just as I had mine. Well, it occurred to me a long time ago that if you married a clergyman, it might be managed yet. So, when our Dr. Devine had to go South this winter for his health, and Arthur Sterrett came to supply his place, I thought at once, here is just the husband for Jean. So well suited, you know, I am sure you would be perfectly happy; only, instead of bringing you church-plans, he must bring you rectory-plans. For this is the rest of my idea: Dr. Devine will come back by the last of February, and Arthur will of course before that time have a call to some other place. Some lovely little town somewhere, I am sure it will be, with a pretty church already built. Then you can donate ten thousand dollars to the parish to build a handsome rectory, ten thousand to the Rev. Mr. Sterrett, to take him on a tour to Europe when he needs rest, put twenty thousand in the bank for a fund, the interest being used to increase the Rev. Mr. Sterrett's salary, and with the rest you can buy a splendid organ and a library for the church, and put in a great memorial window, and then settle down, and live in clover all the rest of your days! There, haven't I planned it well?"

"O Clem! Clem!" cried Jean, laughing merrily; "what an imagination you have!"

"But don't laugh! I'm in dead earnest! What do you think?"

But Jean persisted in regarding the whole matter as an excellent joke; indeed, she felt she could not treat it in any other light without an indignation which Clem would not understand.

"O very well!" said Clem, at last, with an offended air. "If you don't want to, you needn't."

"I had a great deal rather talk about your love affairs," said Jean, pleasantly. "Who is it to be, Clem—that Captain Trevor who was here this evening?"

"O, I don't know," replied Clem, eva-

sively. "What is Charlie Thrale doing now-a-days?"

And in the midst of a talk about old times, the girls fell asleep.

CHAPTER VI.

AFTER Clem's suggestions, it was not easy for Jean to meet the young clergyman the next day without a slight feeling of consciousness, so she infused a little stiffness into her manner, which, however, he did not seem to notice, but sat a long time patiently explaining to her architectural designs and various technical terms. After a confidential discussion over cornices and gargoyles, there was hardly any use in resuming formality; so it ended, after all, in Jean and Arthur Sterrett becoming real friends.

Clem nodded her head at this, and augured well for her plans, in spite of Jean's unpromising reception of them. But Arthur was not by any means the only person to be considered; there was all Clementina's gay world of friends constantly coming and going, and not unfrequently one or another of them seemed inclined to lay siege to Jean's heart; but Clem, with the utmost care, piloted her safely past all these shoals, "for Arthur's sake," as she justified it to herself. Jean did not notice this; she was pleased with the parties she went to, and the attentions she received, but her mind was not intent upon them, for she was really becoming quite too anxious about the disposal of Aunt Drew's legacy, now that the time of decision was so close at hand, to think much of other things until that was over.

One evening they were expecting a large number of guests, and the girls were dressing together up stairs.

"I declare, I feel haggard!" said Clem, suddenly, as she stood touching her cheeks with a violet-scented puff. "This sort of life don't pay, after all. Jean, I wish some one was in love with me! I really thought Captain Trevor was, until he went away so strangely last week, leaving only a card for a farewell."

"Maybe he will soon come back," suggested Jean, sympathizingly.

"O, I don't depend much on that. Absolutely, Jean, I have had three or four serious disappointments since I came here. I sometimes wish Aunt Drew had never brought me here, but that I had staid

quietly at home, like you, and by this time, maybe, have married Charlie Thrale?"

"Go back with me, then, when I go, Clementina!" urged Jean, with earnestness, touched by this lifting of the veil.

"And be patronized by Mrs. Marlowe, and drilled by old Siebert again? No, thank you, it's too late. My voice is spoilt for the church choir, and that is but a sample. Everything else is to match. I never could fit into the old place again. Come, Jean, do hurry those rosebuds into your hair, and come down stairs. I expect to hear the bell every instant."

Later in the evening, when Jean had been implored again and again to sing, turning, as she always did to the pieces of sacred music, she took up the chant "Come unto me, all ye who labor," and sang that.

In the momentary hush that fell over the gay throng, she raised her eyes and saw a gentleman standing near, who was regarding her intently, with pleasant familiar eyes, that set her wondering.

Almost the next instant Clem exclaimed:

"Why, Orrin Drew! Where on earth did you come from?"

So it was Orrin! Jean heard him explaining that he had taken a little holiday from business, and having first revisited his old home, had now come to spend a few days with his mother and sister.

"You are as much of a stranger to me as to the rest," said Clem, as she introduced him to the company. "I did not know that I possessed a mustached and bearded brother like this! O, here is Jean Argyle! Did you know she was here? Of course, though, you did, if you have just come from the village."

"I knew it," said Orrin, joining Jean at once.

"I don't think I should have known you anywhere, Orrin," said Jean, after the first pleased welcome.

"Because I didn't knock over a chair, or step on somebody's dress before I reached you?" he asked, with the same off-hand manner of old.

He was changed, certainly. The awkward, impulsive, ingenious boy had become the self-possessed, self-reliant and successful man. Already he occupied a responsible position in the great manufacturing firm at Lowbury. Some improvements and practical suggestions of his in the matter of machinery had brought him

into notice and rapid promotion. He grew enthusiastic in talking about his work and prospects to Jean, as they sat a little apart from the rest on one of Clem's tete-a-tetes, and that he was as kind-hearted as ever was proved by his remarks about the workmen employed in the different buildings.

"Nearly five hundred in all," he said, gravely. "Just think of that, Jean! There are sometimes two or three from one family, but even then, consider how many families must be represented!"

"Do they all live in Lowbury?" asked Jean.

"Only a few, those who have worked longest. Our buildings are not in the town, but out north of it a little, and of late years, since the firm have employed so many men coming from a distance, they have put up a number of houses for them, so that really now we are a suburb of Lowbury, almost a little town of ourselves. Men, women and children. I am frightened sometimes when I think of the responsibility."

"No, thank you, Mr. Murray, I will not dance this evening," said Jean to a gentleman who came up at this moment and interrupted them.

"Orrin, I think we shall be in the way when the sets form; suppose we retreat to a corner of Clem's boudoir. I am really anxious to hear more about your workmen."

So, in the quietest corner that could be found, Orrin enlarged upon his theme to an attentive listener. And thus Jean found out all about the evening school, which one of the firm had started, and in which Orrin taught; also about the special efforts which the northern school district of Lowbury had been induced to make, to draw in the children of the workmen, with quite promising success. And lastly, she heard with much interest an account of the Sunday school, Orrin's own pet scheme, for which he had labored almost single-handed, until now it was fairly established, with a good attendance of men and women, as well as of children. She had not known that Orrin cared so much for such things. But here also Dr. Rawley's teachings had been seed sown in good ground, and Orrin's life was becoming daily more and more enriched with pure purposes and noble aims.

"I suppose you hold the Sunday school

in a church or chapel?" said Jean, inquiringly.

"O no," Orrin answered, "we are not so fortunate as to have either, and the Lowbury churches are too far away. That is one reason why I am so anxious about the school, because it is really the only Sunday service our men have. We hold it in a large unfinished workroom, the same in which the evening school meets. You have no idea how the people seem to enjoy it. And O Jean, how often I have wished that our home choir were there with me to help about the singing! To-night, when I came in and heard you singing that beautiful anthem, 'Come unto me,' it seemed to me that I would give worlds to hear it sung by the same clear sweet voice among our people who 'labor and are heavy-laden.'"

Jean made no reply, she was busy thinking. The dancing had stopped, and Clem was at the piano, singing "Within a mile o' Edinboro' town." After a moment's pause Orrin began again; he was talking now of Dr. Rawley and the old times in the choir, but Jean did not seem to heed what he was saying.

"Why, Orrin?" she exclaimed, suddenly; "the more I think of it, the more plainly I see it! I am so glad I waited! Don't you see? I must build a church at Lowbury with Aunt Drew's legacy."

CHAPTER VIII.

"GOING to build a church at Lowbury?" cried Clem, a few days after, when on receiving a letter of approval from Dr. Rawley, Jean announced her plans. "That smoky, grimy manufacturing town! I must say, I don't admire your taste! And what, pray, is to become of Arthur Sterrett?"

"He will receive a call to become the first rector of Emanuel," said Jean, who had already talked the matter over with Orrin, and introduced him to the zealous young clergyman.

"Ah, ah!" answered Clem, mindful of her plans. "Now, Jean darling, you know I am dying of curiosity. Please do tell me, are you going to be the rector's wife?"

"No indeed!" replied Jean, laughing. "That honor belongs to a very sweet young lady living in Mr. Sterrett's native

town. He has told me all about her, and is only waiting to be settled, when he will marry her at once."

"Well, I must say," said Clem, petulantly, "I think I have been shabbily treated, and everything has turned out as badly as possible. I'm sure, I don't see whom you are to marry now, and you are giving away the whole of Aunt Drew's legacy without managing to secure a penny for yourself! What are you going to do, Jean?"

"Go home and go to work, of course!" said Jean, cheerfully. "Teach school, maybe. I feel as if I could do anything now, with this burden off my mind. I have not felt so light-hearted for two years."

And home she went, feeling like an expresident or a general who has been "relieved." There would be a few more letters to write, she thought, a few more newspaper items to read, and then the ripples in her life would all die out, leaving perfect peace and calm. For a while she was glad of this anticipated quiet, but after the first welcome sensation of rest, she began to feel lost without her "burden." She had now no more far-away possible interest in struggling churches in Maine or Michigan; no more St. Barnabases would ask her for bells, nor poor students seek her help in getting a theological education. Everything was now centered down into one fixed point, Lowbury church, but she could not even see it building, or scarcely realize it.

Still, it was pleasant to be consulted in regard to the many building plans proposed, and here Arthur Sterrett's information did her good service. It was pleasant to have a drawing of the fine lot which the manufacturing firm had donated, and to be told, in a special letter of good news, that they were going also to build a rectory.

Then Orrin sent her two fine drawings made by himself, after the plan of the church was fully decided on, representing the interior and exterior as it would appear when complete. Jean pored over these, and studied out transept and choir-loft, column and arches, with great interest.

"I don't see but Sis is just as busy as ever," said Robbie, one day. "Orrin, he writes and asks her about everything, just as if she was the pope!"

But it was pleasant to be consulted, certainly, and kept up a little ripple in life still.

"It makes the world so much broader," Jean said to her mother one day. "I had a great deal rather be thinking about church building than about tatting, and ruffling, and fluting."

"Each is good in its place," said Mrs. Argyle.

"O, I know that, mother," replied Jean, who was at that very moment setting neat little stitches in a shirt for Robbie. "I'm willing to let my fingers hem, you see, but I won't keep my thoughts hemming."

Time passed on, and Lowbury church was almost done. When a question arose about its windows, their colors, subjects and symbols, Jean wrote to Orrin:

"Only one thing I insist on, and that is a narrow purple window similar to the one I like so much in our dear old church here, opening out into the elm. I always loved to look at it, and may be some dreamy Lowbury girl will love to look at one, too, in Emanuel."

"She shall look at it herself, God willing!" said Orrin, as he read her letter.

And she did. When the church was completed at last, and the day of consecration arrived, Dr. Rawley, with his sister and Jean, went down to Lowbury to the solemn ceremonies. Jean trod the aisles in a sort of happy wonder. What! this great fair house of the Lord, where the word of life would be dispensed to such crowds of poor workingmen and their fam-

ilies—*could* all this be, in any least degree, owing to her, to any small self-denial of hers, to any slight privation she had borne? Not for her own merit, she knew that, but to think that God should have used any little event in her life to work out such great good, the wonder and the blessedness of it overcame her.

"O, I can never, *never* be thankful enough," she thought, "that Aunt Drew left that money just as she did!"

The Rev. Arthur Sterrett was also present at the consecration services, full of zeal and interest in his new parish, and bringing with him a gentle sweet-voiced bride. Jean smiled as she recalled some of the vain plans that had been made in his behalf.

"How absurd Clem was!" she said to herself. "I really don't expect ever to be married at all!"

"I have loved you for years, Jean, will you marry me?" asked Orrin Drew, ten minutes later, as they stood by themselves up in the bell-tower, looking out over the factories and the parish; and Jean laid her hand in his for his answer. So much for expectations!

"Dear me! are *all* our choir going over to Lowbury?" exclaimed Mrs. Marlowe, when she heard how things were going.

"It is just as it should be," said good old Dr. Rawley. "And may our two young friends be like Isaac and Rebecca!"

BACK TO BACK.

BY M. QUAD OF THE MICHIGAN PRESS.

I HAD with me as partner in the provision and supply business at Blue Ledge, Arizona, in the year 1859, a man named Watkins. He was not young, being about fifty-five, but was one of the best-hearted men I ever saw. Liberal, honest, straightforward, he was just the person I wanted, for I was gone much of the time, and he had full charge of the Blue Ledge depot.

We had made money, and were doing a thriving business when the excitement of the Big Wolf Diggings broke out. The miners had discovered a new field, rich and profitable, and in a week everybody was on the rush for Big Wolf. I went with the rest, the distance being about sixty miles from Blue Ledge. I saw that a depot there must do a good business, and, returning, we arranged that Watkins should go up and take charge.

We loaded up three teams, and they were ready to start, when the old man suddenly took a notion that I must go along and see him properly established. He had a horror of daybooks and ledgers, and so I made such arrangements with our foreman as would let me off for a week.

There were thirty or forty teams altogether, with near two hundred men. Everybody was wild about Big Wolf, and everybody was moving that way. Watkins and I were mounted, having good horses of our own, and, as was the universal custom, we were both well armed.

It was a wild and a new route after we got beyond Yellow Creek, and the teams had to go slowly. Game was plenty, and so, while the teams crept along at the rate of three or four miles an hour, most of the mounted men had opportunities for trying their rifles. Watkins was a good rider, a fine shot, and he enjoyed the sport intensely. The third day out, soon after breaking camp, we struck a mountainous country, and had great sport with the wolves. We finally entered a long narrow valley, closed in on either side by a range. Watkins was in the rear, and I ahead with the teams, when I got word that one of the party had been accidentally shot, and I rode back to get further information. The man, who

was not badly hurt, was placed in a wagon, and we were about to move on, when Watkins's horse suddenly broke away from him, dashed up a pass in the left-hand range, and was soon out of sight. He got the loan of a led horse, mounted, and he and I started in pursuit. While we knew that the hostile Apaches roamed through this section, we had no fear of meeting them. In fact, the idea of danger from any source did not enter our minds.

Spurring up the pass, we got through the range in a few minutes, and came out into a valley like the one we had left, a small creek running through it. Half a mile down we caught sight of the horse, prancing about as if greatly pleased. Galloping down, we caught him, and Watkins had just changed horses, when we were startled by a voice crying out:

"Hold on there a moment! We want to speak to you!"

We were close to the west side of the range, and, looking up, we saw eight men—every one of whom had his rifle pointed down—on a ledge about fifty feet above us.

"Robbers and cutthroats!" whispered Watkins to me. "Let's make a dash for it!"

I was just gathering the reins and bracing myself for a run, when the leader of the gang seemed to understand our thoughts, and he called down:

"We have got a dead thing on both of you! If you move one rod, we'll shoot you both!"

We were not thirty yards from the eight rifles, and could almost tell the color of the eyes looking along the black barrels. The chances were ten to one against us, and so we sat our horses.

Seeing that we intended to obey his orders, the leader of the robbers lowered his rifle, as did three others, and these four began to descend the ledge, while the other four still held their rifles upon us. As soon as the first four got down, they walked out and cut off our retreat, and were then soon joined by the others.

"Now, to commence with, come down

from your saddles!" commanded the leader, coming up within a few feet.

We both alighted, and stood holding our horses by the bits. The gang all came up, dropping their rifles and pulling out their revolvers, and we were completely surrounded.

"So far so good," remarked the leader. "Now yank out those revolvers and throw 'em on the grass, and drop those rifles from your saddles!"

Watkins whispered to me that they were going to murder us, and that we had better lose our lives in a sharp fight than to tamely submit. But I looked from one evil face to another, saw the eight revolvers on the cock, and realized that we should be riddled in a second. I therefore obeyed the order, and my partner sullenly followed my example.

"That's all right, too," remarked the leader. "Now let go your horses, and come over here to the rocks. Three of you fellows (to the men) take charge of the horses."

We walked over to the base of the ledge, and five of the men grouped around us, still holding their revolvers ready. The horses were led down the valley out of sight, but the men returned in three or four minutes. The leader had been looking at us with great attention, and he finally inquired:

"Don't you men run a supply store at Blue Ledge? Aint you Watkins and Blank?"

I replied that he was correct, and I thought his face softened a little.

"Well, I thought so," he continued. "About a year ago, you folks did a good turn for my old partner, Ace Johnson, when he tried to reform and become a miuer, and I am sorry that you are not some one else. We make it a rule to slash throats when we get through with prisoners, but I'm blown if we can do it in your cases. When a man does a good turn for Sim Smith's friends, it's a good turn for me, and I'll remember it."

I recollected the circumstance to which he alluded, and expressed hopes that he would let us off, promising him that we would never lend ourselves to any effort to capture him. He called the men a few rods away, and they had a stormy discussion, all but Smith being in favor of robbing and murdering us. At last they fixed

matters up to suit them, and came back, Smith saying:

"I am sorry, but business is business with us. The boys have agreed to this: we shall take what you have, tie you up, and then go off about our business. Your friends will miss you, come back, and before noon you will be released. We shall have to take your horses and arms, but you are both rich, and wont mind it."

The man had fought hard to save our lives, and we had no objections to urge against our being plundered. We both felt that we had been very fortunate not to have been shot down at once.

We handed over our wallets and watches, our knives, tobacco pouches, pipes, etc., and the fellows took every article. When they knew we had nothing more, we were conducted down the valley about fifteen rods, made a sharp turn to the left, and were then in a basin about an acre in extent, the creek having its rise here. There was a wild plum tree standing about the centre of the basin, and we were led to it.

"I really hope you wont take it hard," remarked Smith, as he motioned to the men to produce cords. "We have got to tie you up to secure ourselves, but your friends will no doubt arrive before noon, and then you'll be all right."

We were backed up to the tree, Watkins on the east and I on the west side. Standing straight up, our arms were drawn behind us, the cords brought forward, and in three minutes we were as fast as knots could make us. The cords were small and stout, and were drawn so tightly around my wrists that I had not the least hope of being able to secure my own release.

"Now then, gentlemen," said Smith, removing his hat and bowing, "allow me to bid you good-morning. I am sorry that you happened to fall into our hands, but you might have found worse men than this gang. I am very much obliged for the little loan you have so courteously granted, and—well, good-by. I wont trouble you to shake hands."

The man had such a cool polite way that I had to smile; and but for the fact of our horses going off, it would not have seemed like actual robbery. The fellows were out of sight as soon as out of the basin, and we could not see what route they took to get out of the little valley.

They were no sooner gone than we be-

gan an effort to release ourselves. We pulled, twisted, strained and worked for half an hour before we would give up that the cords would not untie or break. Then we were forced to realize that there was no escape for us until our friends came. When would they come? This was a question which caused us much anxiety, especially after we had stood at the tree for an hour, and both felt the need of water.

"I think the chances are agin us," remarked Watkins, who was suffering much. "The party will go on until noon, at least, before missing us, and perhaps until night. But, if they miss us at noon, they wont remember just where we left the valley, and with the dozen passes through the range, all excitement, all anxious to get on, why, they wont feel like searching much, and might search a day and not find us."

Younger and more vigorous, I did not take such a melancholy view of the situation, and my hopeful tones kept my companion up for two or three hours more. About noon, when the sun was hottest, and when I would have given my share of the Blue Ledge warehouse and stock for ten drops of water from the merry little creek five steps away, Watkins suddenly exclaimed:

"For Heaven's sake, don't move your feet! A fearful big rattlesnake is coming through the grass towards us!"

The snake came right along up to within two feet of Watkins, and then crawled around to my side, where the sun was hottest, and stretched himself out at full length on the grass directly in front of me, not a foot from my boots. He was the largest specimen I had ever seen, being fully eight feet long, and I counted fifteen rattles on his tail. It was a horrid sight to see the body twisting and drawing, but I could not help looking.

In whispers I informed Watkins of the location of the snake, and warned him that one move would send the reptile's fangs into my leg. A bit of paper had fallen on the grass, and was lifted now and then by the light breeze. The snake amused itself by striking at the paper, always hitting it with his head, holding it a moment, and then drawing back. It had been playing this way for fifteen or twenty minutes, when Watkins's sufferings for water were

so great that he had to groan. His lips had not closed when the snake coiled up, rounded his rattles, and moved his head this way and that to search out the enemy.

Two or three minutes passed, and hearing the scream of a hawk on the cliffs, the reptile uncoiled and crawled off. When there was no more danger, Watkins suggested that we raise our voices in a united cry, so that if any one were searching, it might answer as a guide. For a full hour, or until both of us were hoarse, we shouted the "too-hoo-o-o-o-h!" of the Western hunter. The screaming of the hawks was the only answer.

At three o'clock Watkins was in a high fever, and his mind seemed deranged. I was suffering for water, but had a cool head, and believed I could endure until night. He suffered more, but he also allowed his mind to dwell on the situation, and it was the idea that we were to die at the tree which made him deranged. He could no longer speak aloud, but he whispered "water! water!" every instant. I talked to him about our business, pretended that I heard shots and shouts, affirmed that help was at hand; but I could rally him only for a moment, and then he would return to his whispers.

At five o'clock he was so stupid that I could not arouse him. I shouted a dozen times, and then could not get more than a whisper. I reached my leg around and kicked him, but he had sunk down until his weight rested on the cords, and he would not stir. Two hours more dragged on, and then the sun was down behind the range, and the shadows began to creep across the basin. It was of no use to try to arouse my companion, and I gave up any attempt, making up my mind that we would not get help before the morrow, and that I should have to pass the loneliest night of my life.

Just as the shadows deepened I caught sight of something which made my flesh creep. A large mountain wolf, almost as large as a full-grown Newfoundland dog, came trotting into the basin, stopping not more than thirty feet from me. I could see his long fangs, his glassy eyes, and I forgot my pain and want of water. The wolf gave a howl, and in a moment a companion appeared in sight. The two came closer, walked around us in a circle, snuffed at us, and then growled and snarled

until my hair was on end. Were we to be eaten alive?

I tried for a last time to rouse Watkins. I whispered to him of the new danger, kicked him—did everything I could to bring him to realize the presence of a new foe, but he did not even groan. The wolves were frightened at my efforts, and ran up the valley; but were back again in ten minutes, and recommenced circling around us. At length one of them paused in front of me, not five feet away, and began to growl and gnash his teeth. I knew he was going to attack me, and I got ready. Working up his courage, the brute suddenly made the spring, but I gave him a kick in the head which rolled him over and over, and sent him on howling.

Five minutes after both wolves were in front of me, and I believed my time had come. But they did not leap. They crawled in on me and dashed at my legs. My heavy boots protected me, and helped me to worst them. I kicked with one foot, then the other, and at last drove them off, though I realized that another such attack would place me in their power. They ran off toward the ledge, behind me, and then I knew that Watkins's time had come. He could offer no defence, and would be an easy victim.

I could not shout—speak—I was helpless to save him. I heard the brutes growling and snarling, and directly they both rushed

upon him. The poor man gave a yell as he felt their teeth, but all was over in a moment, and they were eating away at the flesh. I could hear them tear his clothing, strip off the flesh, crack the bones, and I nearly went mad. I believe that I was going crazy with fear and horror, when I suddenly heard shouts and two or three rifle shots. The wolves paused in their work, growling at being disturbed. The shouts came again, and I tried to reply. I opened my mouth, but could not even whisper. I knew that my friends were searching, but I was powerless to aid them.

Five minutes passed, and then up the valley I saw the reflection of a light. The wolves saw it as well, and rose up and dashed off, one of them having part of an arm in his mouth. In a moment I heard a cry of "wolves!" three or four shots, and then men came galloping into the basin. I was saved, but I was like a child—almost like a lunatic for weeks, being under the care of doctor and nurse, and afraid even of an evening shadow. Smith and his gang had followed on after the party, and in attacking a portion of it, the bandit chief had been mortally wounded. He did not live five minutes, but he used his time to tell the men how he had captured and tied up Watkins and myself, and this was all that saved me from death—death from the wolves, or from hunger and thirst.

SILVER ARDEN.

BY MISS CAMILLA WILLIAN.

Our West, very far out, on one of the great prairies, and five miles from any town, was the farm of Mr. Arden. It was no great of a farm, but was pretty fair, such a one as John Arden, a young man of nineteen, and his

It is pretty hard for a man to think that he has got to delve on a farm and support a family all his life, even after he gets old, and so Mr. Arden talked the matter over with his wife and John, and told them that if

they would stay and carry on the little farm, he would go to California and get rich for them.

It was hard to consent to part, but they did consent, and Mr. Arden went.

Two years is not so long a time when people are busy, and it soon went round for the Ardens. Their little farm had prospered, and the absent father had prospered. Letters came from him frequently, and at last came the blessed letter saying that he was to start for home immediately, and would reach there some time in February or March.

Then indeed the little family was a happy one! What plans they laid! How they made everything look as well as possible, and prepared to feast the wanderer who had been so long absent!

"Do you suppose that father will bring Silver back, mother?" Phil asked.

Silver was a pet pup that Phil had given his father on his going away; not that his father wanted a pup, he thought, but because the boy wanted to give him the most precious thing he had, and Silver was the most precious.

Mr. Arden could not refuse, but took the little creature with him, and cherished it, and delighted his boy at home by writing how

bright Silver was growing, and what great friends they were.

"I don't know, dear," Mrs. Arden answered to her boy's question. "If he only brings himself safely, we shall have enough to be thankful for."

Mrs. Arden was a very calm and sensible woman; but she was very much moved at the thought of seeing her husband after so long a time, and she could scarcely believe



SILVER ARDEN, THE PET PUP.

mother, and Phil Arden, a boy of six, could work very well.

So Mr. Arden thought, and he thought, too, that he must positively get rich faster. He had a brother in California who was making money in heaps, and this brother wrote him that if he would come out there and stay two years, he could go back, a rich man, and buy one of the finest places in the West, and live in ease all the rest of his days.

that all was to go on so brightly and prosperously to the end. It seemed to her that something must happen that was painful, everything had gone so well as yet. But she kept these fears to herself, and tried indeed to laugh at them. Every night before they went to bed she and her two boys knelt down, and she prayed that her husband and their father might be brought safely back to them.

The weeks glided away, and the time came when they could say, "Perhaps he will be here this week, or certainly next week."

They couldn't do anything else for thinking of it, but wandered about watching for letters, and looking up the long, long road across the prairie to the next town. It was a long, straight road, and there was nothing grew on it but a few small shrubs, so they could see for miles.

At length they got a telegram. Mr. Arden had arrived safely at St. Louis, and would be at home in a few days.

Then indeed it seemed as though all was going right, and no accident could happen. The family went happily about their work. Their little cottage was as bright and clean as it could be made. They had bought some new things to fit it up, for since father was coming with lots of money, they could afford to spend what they had. Besides this, Mrs. Arden had made mince pies, and a wonderful loaf of cake, a wedding-cake, she called it, and she had a turkey to roast for dinner, and many other good things. They had their own cider and apples, and all those country delicacies to be found on a farm.

"I think he'll be here to-morrow, mother," Phil said one evening as they all gathered round the fire after supper. "It's time for him, and I guess he'll come. Won't he think it looks pretty here?"

Mrs. Arden smiled, but said nothing as she glanced round the room. It was indeed pretty, with a bright new carpet on the floor, pictures on the walls, a new armchair bought on purpose for father, standing in the corner, the little table with the Bible and the shaded lamp on it setting ready for the evening's reading, and the firelight playing over all.

"I hope it will clear off well in the morning," said John, the elder brother. "I'd like father to get home on a sunshiny day."

"Is there much snow fallen, my son?" the mother asked, looking up from the fire in which she had been dreaming.

"There are several inches," the boy replied,

"and it is falling fast now and drifting some."

"I am sorry," the mother said, her face clouding a little. She also would like her husband to get home on a sunshiny day. Besides, if the snow should drift on that long road, it would delay his coming. There was very little travel in that direction, and sometimes it would be days before a road would be broken out after a heavy snow.

"But maybe it will clear away in the morning," she said more brightly. "I think what little wind there is is a fair one."

They all sat still and listened for the wind, and in the silence they heard the soft silken rustle of the snow on the windows. If the father had been with them, it would have been a pleasant sound. But since the snow was falling between them and him, it had a sad sound.

Nothing was said for a long while; then Phil began to repeat their plans for the twentieth time, asking if they would go to town to live, if John would go to college, and so on. John brightened, too, and told what he meant to study, and where he meant to go.

But Mrs. Arden could not talk. She felt sad and troubled, and wished the night away.

"Let's have some cider and apples, mother," John said. "They will help to pass the time away."

"Very well, you get them," she said, starting as he spoke.

John took a candle and plate, and Phil took a pitcher, and the two went down cellar and presently came up again, John with the plate piled with rosy, shining apples, and Phil with the pitcher foaming over with cider. They set them down, and soon were naming apples and drinking healths quite merrily. But though Mrs. Arden tried to be cheerful for the sake of her children, she could not shake off her gloomy feelings, and was glad when their little feast was over.

"Now, boys, we must have prayers, and go to bed," she said.

They sobered themselves while she read a chapter in the Bible, then they knelt down, and she prayed fervently for all, but most, for the safe return of their absent loved one. She prayed so earnestly that when they rose from their knees all three had tears in their eyes, and the boys felt that they must not rejoice too soon, but must remember how uncertain everything on earth is.

Just before going to bed Mrs. Arden opened the door into the little porch, and looked out

to see what the weather was. It was not very cold, though cold enough to make her shiver, but the snow was falling very thickly, and all she could see was a white waste. She looked sighing in the direction of the town, and was about going into the house again, when she stopped and listened.

The two boys were still in the sitting-room, and they heard her say in a low, quick voice, "Boys, come here!"

They hurried out onto the step, and saw her leaning out and looking up in the direction of the town. Nothing was to be seen, so thick was the snow, and since there was no moon.

"Listen!" she said, stretching her hand toward them, but without looking round.

With a chill of fear they hushed themselves and listened. A faint sound came, smothered in snow, carried away by the soft, stifled wind. Then a lull, and it came clearly, the bark of a dog!

Mrs. Arden looked round with an excited, pallid face.

"The lantern, quick!" she exclaimed. "Some one is lost in the snow!"

Not a word was said more. With breathless haste, not daring to think what it might be to which they were going, the boys hurried on the boots they had taken off, buttoned their jackets, pulled their caps about their ears, put on mittens, all in a minute, and John taking a shovel, and Phil the lantern, they started out with their mother. She also had hurried on boots, a thick fur sack, tied a shawl over her head, and put a flask of brandy into her pocket.

Silent still they set out, and shovelled their way through the snow in the direction of that barking, stopping when it ceased, and hurrying on when they heard it. Before starting they had set the centre lamp on a table close to the window, and but for that they might soon have lost sight of the house. For the night was nothing but a whirl of snow, and the direction they took was outside of the road.

Nearer and nearer they came, floundering through the drifts, their lantern casting a foggy gleam about them. They were but a little way off, and now they saw something moving before them, and now, with their hearts in their mouths, they hold up the lantern and see a beautiful silver-white dog with brown spots, who looks up at them with large imploring eyes, and tries to paw away the light snow from beneath his feet.

"It is Silver!" cried Philip, almost in a scream. But the other two said not a word. They only push away the snow with frantic haste, and with shivering moans pull out the senseless form of a man lying there under the drift.

The dog with a sharp bark catches a hat in his teeth, and runs after them, and Mrs. Arden and John go staggering back through the drifts with that awful burden, Philip weeping and carrying the lantern.

"O father! father!" muttered John below his breath, as the light from the lantern fell on that well-known face.

"Lay him down a moment," the mother said to John, when they were about half way to the house.

They both knelt in the snow, and bore up the burden on their knees, while Mrs. Arden took the brandy-flask from her pocket and poured a little between the lips of her husband. Then they lifted him again, and never stopped till they reached their own bright sitting-room. There they laid him down, and rubbed his stiffened limbs, and poured the brandy between his teeth, doing everything to keep or to find the breath of life in him. Not a word was said except when Mrs. Arden whispered her directions to the boys. Philip hushed his cries, and did what he could, looking from the pale face of his father to the face, nearly as pale, of his mother.

It was but half an hour, but to them it seemed long hours, before a faint sign of motion was visible in those closed eyelids, and there was breath in the parted lips.

"O, thank God! thank God!" cried out Mrs. Arden, so wildly that the boys looked at her in alarm. Never before had they seen their mother so excited, so almost beside herself. She had controlled her feelings during the time of suspense, and when all her strength and forethought were needed; but it was deserting her now, and when at last Mr. Arden opened his eyes, and looked round on them, and knew where he was, his wife sank fainting on the floor.

Then of course there was a new fright, and the boys were ready to give up quite. But joy does not kill, and in a few minutes their mother opened her eyes again.

It is useless to try to describe the scene that followed, the joy tempered by terror of what might have been, the thanksgiving, the weeping welcomes. It was not till nearly morning that Mr. Arden could tell them how

It happened that he so nearly lost his life. He had reached the town just at evening, and being unable to get a horse to take him out home, had determined to walk. The storm did not seem to be much, and he did not dream of there being snow enough to blind him to the road. He walked and walked, growing tired and drowsy, he struggled to keep up, he strained his eyes to see the home-light, and at length, within sight of it, he fell.

Then Mrs. Arden told her story, too, how fearful she had been, how she had gone to look out, and had heard the dog barking.

You may depend that dog was not forgotten, and if ever any little quadruped was in danger of being eaten up with caresses, it was Silver Arden. For it was that same little Silver grown up.

The next day was not quite as merry as they had expected the welcome home to be; but it was happy and full of thanksgiving. The sun shone out, the snow tossed and played in the light wind, and about noon a great express-wagon came down from town with Mr. Arden's trunks in it. The snow wasn't so very deep in the road, but Mr. Arden had lost his way, and got into a hollow.

One of the first things that was to be done was to have a picture of Silver painted by the very best artist that could be found. And that picture hangs in the Ardens' parlor to

this day. Opposite it is a portrait of Phil, taken as he was before his father went away, as he stood with his torn straw hat only half covering his bright brown hair, and held his



PHIL BIDDING HIS PUP GOOD-BY.

hands out for a last embrace of his dear little pup, the boy almost as much grieved at parting with him as with his father.

Mr. and Mrs. Arden wouldn't sell either of those pictures for untold money.

SKETCHES OF COLLEGE LIFE TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO.

BY J. S. B.

If the college experience of the many graduates among us could be collected together, what an amusing series of sketches might be produced. There is scarcely one, but has passed through many amusing scenes during a four years of college life. It would require more space than would be allowed in these pages, to relate all I could recall of the incidents of college life, but a few random sketches may not prove uninteresting, showing how the routine of study, which might become monotonous and wearisome, is wont to be broken in upon by incidents, tending to make the cloistered life more endurable and the remembrance in after days always pleasant.

No matter where my "Alma Mater" was located. It would not give zest to the following incidents of college life, gentle reader, if you were able to locate the scenes; but if you think study and brain-cudgelling comprise all that is going on within college walls, if you think the student, when he enters college, segregates himself from the great world

around, takes no thought of the morrow, or has none of the cares that beset the outside world, or shuts and bars his heart against any attack from the softer sex, you have made a sad mistake. Much is said about the student's "midnight lamp," hollow cheek, attenuated frame worn down by hard study, as if all these were necessary accompaniments to the life of a college student. But we deny most of these mournful facts, although we accept the midnight lamp; the "witching hour" has often found me deep in the mysteries of "Conic Sections," generally because I had spent the early evening in some "gay and festive scene," or in some occupation not found in college regulations. An aching head and wearied limbs would afford no excuse to Professor S—— for to-morrow's "fizzle," and sick or well I must be prepared to prove why $a+b$ is equal to $c+d$; hence this midnight oil. And then the morning prayers at early dawn; how often have I hugged my pillow till the bell "kicked," and then, half-dressed, with the

ample folds of my cloak to hide a multitude of sins of omission in dressing, hastened to the chapel, arriving just in time to save the tardy mark. But the college of to-day has quietly laid upon the shelf these time-honored regulations, and *early morning prayers* belong to the misty past.

Every college class has its glee clubs, and its musical characters. Our class furnished a large number in the college choir. It was my privilege to play upon the bass viol (or "bull fiddle" as we called it), for two years of college life. Now a seat in the choir was a great desideratum, for it carried with it privileges not enjoyed by our brethren below stairs. We were more removed from the eye of the watchful tutors; and then on a Sabbath, the gallery pews were occupied by the families of the professors, and many a flirtation is carried on between choir members and the young lady members of the aforesaid families. At Sabbath eve prayers, the choir always performed an "anthem," on which occasion the galleries would be filled with young ladies collected to hear the wonderful performance. But the anthem on Christmas eve was the event of the year with the choir, and the same old time-honored anthem was always sung, beginning, "In heaven the rapturous song began." Strange to say, I have never heard the anthem anywhere else, before or since those days of college life. On this occasion, the chapel galleries were packed with the beauty and fashion of the city, forming a dress circle of loveliness.

First came the reading of the Scriptures, during which all was quiet bustle in the choir; my old fiddle-bow always got an extra rub of rosin, and the subdued remarks of the chorister were listened to with eager intent. As the good book was closed by the professor who conducted the services, the bustle in the choir increased, rising at last to concert pitch, and we sailed in to our performances. I can well remember how the perspiration used to trickle from every pore, in my exertions to have my fiddle heard amid the din, and determined to be "in at the death." Alas, the "bull fiddle" is no more! the violin, the violoncello, the orphiclede, the flute, "harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer," have had their day, and a modern church organ supplies their place in the old chapel. The numbers that compose the choir have been thinned to a baker's dozen, and it might almost be said of the choir that its glory has

departed; at any rate it has ceased to be the *feature* it was in those early days.

The glee club numbered some two or three in every class. Many a night have I spent in serenading the young ladies of our acquaintance. Upon one occasion, we had started to serenade the young ladies at a seminary in the city, but found the ground already occupied by other singers, and actually had to wait for a third turn, two other clubs having arrived before us. Upon another occasion, during a serenade, the window-blinds above were softly opened, and a little white hand appeared, letting down a basket, within which we found a mince pie. On still another occasion, we took with us a piano, mounted in an express wagon, which created great amusement.

Junior year is supposed to be the year of flirtations; senior year brings with it grave cares, and to become a "potent, grave and reverend senior," is to lay aside the little frivolities and nonsense of early college life, and prepare in earnest for life's battles outside of college walls.

The senior class, is always held in high esteem by the under-classes, and the members are expected to set proper examples of dignity and propriety; and amid all the excesses of college students, you will usually find that members of the senior class have no part or lot in the matter.

Junior year our lectures commenced. Lectures on chemistry, mineralogy, geology, etc. Our chemical laboratory, presided over by a professor of world-wide reputation, was the scene of our winter course of lectures; the building had a sort of wing at right angles with the main building, which was occupied by young ladies connected with the seminaries of the city. The projectors of this building "missed a figure," if they supposed the arrangement would effectually check communication between young ladies and students; for, sitting as they did at right angles with each other, even the eloquence of the professor was unequal to the task of securing the fixed attention of either misses or students to the lecture. Each miss had her allotted seat, and enamored students were accustomed to put a *billet-doux* under the cushions, which seldom failed to reach the fair intended. O, those poor professors and tutors! what an unceasing vigilance they practised, and all to no purpose; flirtations would be carried on, in spite of lynx-eyed matrons or frowning professors. After

these confessions, I fear I shall hardly be accredited with being much of a student, but the fact really was, my chum is the real scapegoat; he was, *par excellence*, a lady's man, and the foregoing incidents of the lecture room were matters drawn from *his* experiences.

Fond of amusements of all kinds, fond of society, I never allowed outside matters to interfere *seriously* with my studies. My rank in the class was above the average, particularly in the mathematical department. Many a time have I assisted a poor classmate out of a dilemma at recitation, by slipping a bit of paper unperceived into his book, with the problem written out. If a lesson contained "original points," as we termed them (little intricacies in the lesson that depended upon knowledge previously obtained for solution), the number of delinquents were many. The "original points" taxed the knowledge of the student, and their solution could only be found in the storehouse of the mind. Here was the dilemma of the superficial student; here was the "slough of despond," into which he was sure to plunge, without hope of escape. Many a time, just before the recitation hour, a timid knock at my door, and an anxious face would inquire, "Say, Smith, any original points in to-day's lesson?" Students are found in every class who will "skin a lesson," as we termed this style of borrowing, and a fellow-student who would withhold the information sought, was a mean fellow. It is often the case that the laziest men in college, those who are forever depending upon a chum or fellow-classmate for a lift through an allotted task, turn out to be among those most noted for ability in after life. I have in mind more than one, who have taken a position in life, as noted in law, or in theology, who were the veriest dunces in college.

The college world has its rival societies and clubs, and not a little electioneering is carried on among the members of the new freshman class. The freshmen are the butt of the older classes, and are apt to be looked down upon by those a grade or two higher. But while electioneering is rife, they are politely termed "gentlemen who have recently entered college," and for the first week at least, or until the class has been absorbed into the various societies, they are treated with great distinction. No sooner are their names enrolled, than they become nothing but freshmen, the butt of all, except, perhaps,

the senior class, between whom and the freshmen a better feeling exists; for freshmen are more apt to respect the dignity assumed by the seniors, and the latter feel somewhat bound to protect them, in consequence.

At the institution of which I speak, our coal and winter fuel was furnished the students by the corporation, and the coal yard was situated immediately in the rear of the college dormitories. It was a common method of retaliation for some fancied wrong received from an unpopular tutor, to draw up before his window the diminutive coal wagon, well loaded, and with well directed volleys break every light in his window-frames, literally emptying the aforesaid cart in the tutor's room. So common was this method of "hazing a tutor," that they were obliged to have their windows supplied with wooden shutters, on the inside; and with a small wicket in the shutter, through which the offender might perchance be recognized. I well remember an anecdote told of one of our tutors, who had been subjected to this sort of indignity. In speaking of his position as tutor, and in reply to a question as to his salary, he remarked, his salary was six hundred dollars a year, and his *coal thrown in*.

There is a wide difference in college tutors; some are exceedingly popular with the class, and some are absolutely hated. If disposed to be too exact in their requirements, or too watchful over the morals of the students, they become at once objects of suspicion and distrust, and no opportunity is lost of annoying them in every possible way. One of our tutors was an exceedingly popular man, never reprimanding, or seeming to notice little irregularities; but it was found that when the end of the year arrived, he had been an unseen observer of all that had occurred; that the half-learned tasks and poor recitations, had been lightly esteemed; for whatever his outward bearing, he had not forgotten to keep the debit and credit account of each man as rigidly exact as other tutors.

Our recitation rooms were very uninviting in appearance; rows of hard benches, or settees polished by years of constant wear, the softness of the wood worn away by the constant attrition; it was a penance to sit there a long hour or more. Called up by lot to recite, and consequently never knowing, when you entered the room, whether you would be called upon or not, it became nec-

essary to be always prepared. The tutors (three to each class) occupied an elevated pulpit, or desk, and it was a mournful satisfaction to students, to know that his seat, at least, was no softer than ours.

Sophomores were accustomed to call the attention of freshmen to the non-cushioned seats of their tutor, and suggest that it was customary for each division of the class to provide a cushion. The unsuspecting freshmen seized upon the idea, as a means of securing the favor, at least, of the presiding officer. The seats were accordingly provided with cushions by contribution, and considerable expense was often incurred; the result of rivalry among the divisions. Some were made of silk damask, and I well remember that our division provided one of purple velvet. The day of its installation found us all in our proper places, prompt to time, waiting the advent of the tutor. He approached his throne with a start of surprise, and seating himself, delivered a neat little speech, thanking us for our thoughtfulness, and as-

surging us that he would spare no pains to make the exercises of the recitation-room as comfortable as possible to all.

I fancy he indulged in a few inward smiles at this display of verdancy on the part of the freshmen, for he well knew, probably from the experience of former years, that he was seated on the cushion for the *first and last time*; the morrow found the cushions among the missing; the rascally sophs had prevailed upon us by a little sophistry, to provide them, only that they might steal them the following day. By another year, we were only too ready to play the same trick upon our successors.

The foregoing are but a few of the incidents of a college life. When three or four hundred young men are collected within college walls, it is not possible but that the exuberant spirits and mischief-making tendencies of the youth will crop out somewhere. And, in fact, without it, college life would become irksome, and the college more like a penitentiary.

SLYMPKIN'S REVENGE.

BY N. P. DARLING.

"SAM! Sam! Sam! Where the deuce is that fellow?"

I had rung the bell until I was tired and out of patience, and then called for him until I was out of breath, and still he did not come.

If you want to know who I am, allow me to inform you that my name is George H. Boomerang, better known in Farzedona, where I reside, as Captain Boomerang, late of the army. I am a man of considerable wealth; own the finest house in town, and keep, or did keep, a man by the name of Sam, whose duty it was to brush my clothes, hat and boots, and adjust my leg.

I refer to a wooden leg. The original leg ran against a cannon-ball during our late unpleasantness, and I have never seen it since.

Well, it was Sam's duty to take that wooden leg off at night, and to be on hand again in the morning to put it on before I got out of bed; and now you know why I was yelling "Sam! Sam! Sam!" And when I inform you that this was the morning of my wedding-day, perhaps you can imagine how anxious I was to get onto my legs as soon as possible.

"Yes ma'am, I was the lucky fellow that had walked into the affections—on a wooden leg, too—of the handsomest girl in Farzedona, and was that day to lead her to the altar. But I must get my leg on first, and as Sam wouldn't or couldn't come, I rolled out of bed, and went hopping around on one foot to find my leg.

Now, my dear reader, when the surgeon trimmed my stump, after that little affair with the cannon-ball, he sawed it off uncommonly short; so perhaps you can faintly imagine my feelings, when, after hopping around the room, I found what I supposed to be my leg, but, upon attempting to adjust it, discovered that it was intended to go on below the knee.

"Do wooden legs shrink? That's just what I want to know," said I. And then I rang the bell, and called, "Sam!"

Well, Samuel didn't come, but my house-keeper Mrs. Brown did, and I was just going to ask her if she had ever seen or heard

of a wooden leg that would shrink, when she covered herself with a blush and retired in great haste.

She was a modest woman, you see, and—well, really, I don't think I was hardly prepared for company, as I only had one leg on, and—nothing else to speak of.

"Mrs. Brown," I cried, "where is Sam?"

She answered me through the keyhole of the door. "He left the house last night about eleven o'clock—took his trunk with him, and said he was going to leave town on the midnight train."

"Gone! Why didn't you tell me?"

"He said you knew all about it."

"Why, confound it, woman, I didn't know *anything* about it! Furthermore, ma'am, the scamp has carried off my leg, and left one in place of it which is certainly a foot and a half too short."

"O, what will you do?"

"That's just what I should like to know, ma'am," said I, staring fixedly at that leg.

"And it's your wedding-day," said she.

"Which is just what makes this little difficulty of mine intensely interesting," said I.

"O, isn't there some way for you to surmount the difficulty?"

"I can surmount a pair of crutches," said I; "but, dang it, ma'am, I don't want to be married on crutches!"

"It's awful to think of!" cried Mrs. Brown. And then I heard her leave the door and go slowly down stairs.

"To be married at two o'clock, in church, and only a leg and a half to stand on!" I groaned. "O Samuel! Sam! I don't see how you could have had the heart to do it."

I couldn't understand it at first. I had always used Sam well, paid him good wages, and he had seemed perfectly contented with his situation, and served me faithfully until now.

Suddenly an idea struck me, and the whole cause of Sam's perfidy was revealed to me.

"By heavens, it is Slympkins!" I yelled.

"Slympkins is the cause of all my woe. He bribed Sam to steal my leg, on this my

wedding-day, and leave this insufficient prop in place of it."

Now it is very natural to suppose that the reader would like to know who Slympkins is, and if he will only be patient I will endeavor to enlighten him.

Jim Slympkins is, or was, my rival. He is about my own age (thirty-two), and is the only son of his father, who, by the way, is the most wealthy gentleman in Farzedona. Consequently Jim doesn't do anything but smoke cigars, drive round town behind his splendid grays, and devote himself to the ladies generally.

Farzedona is noted for its pretty women. Statistics show that there are more pretty women to every square yard of ground in Farzedona than in any other city or town in the world. Now, my young friend, don't attempt to dispute this statement, for it would be useless. Figures won't lie.

Well, when I returned from the war, and established myself in the halls of my fathers (they were built by my mother's first, but afterwards occupied by her second and third husbands, and consequently I always speak of my three fathers, instead of my forefathers), I somehow, in a very short time, found myself violently attached to seventeen of the most beautiful young ladies in Farzedona, and, singular as it may seem, they were the very young ladies whom Slympkins was courting.

I rather had the advantage of Slympkins. To be sure Slympkins had, or was expecting to have, much more wealth than I could boast of; but he hadn't my face, you know, or anything like it. Furthermore, the ladies always have been, and probably always will be, fond of the military, and Slympkins was not a military man. But what raised the very deuce with Slympkins was my wooden leg. When that wooden leg walked in, Slympkins had to walk out. Not that the dear creatures loved Slympkins less, but, "ah me, Captain Boomerang with his wooden leg was so chawming, you know."

Yes, I was charming. Anybody with half an eye could see that. Slympkins saw it distinctly, and it was very painful to him. It was as painful as a boil to Slympkins, for he found himself shivering in the shade, while I was basking in the light of thirty-four of the most beautiful eyes in Farzedona.

It was a good thing for Slympkins, my

return to Farzedona. You see he had contracted such a habit of roving from flower to flower, that at last it had become almost an impossibility for him to settle upon any one particular rose. But I took the wind out of his sails, and before I had been in town a month, he was glad to concentrate all his affections upon one lovely flower.

Unfortunately for Slympkins, this flower happened to be the choicest one in my collection of seventeen; and so you see, when he concentrated *his* affections, I did the same, and before he had an opportunity to offer her his heart, I laid mine at her feet, and she accepted it and gave me hers in return.

I was sorry for Slympkins, but, dang it, my dear sir, what could I do? If he had chosen Miss Smith, Miss Brown, Miss Jones, or, in fact, any one but Miss Amelia Seymour, all would have been well. But it was really absurd for Slympkins to suppose that I would allow him or any other man to marry Amelia—at least, while I had a wooden leg.

I would have given Slympkins anything in reason, but it was truly ridiculous for him to think that I would give him Amelia. I told her so, and then I folded her to my breast, and she folded me to her breast, and I allowed her to sip the honey from my ruby lips.

O, what a beauteous creature she was! (and is, for that matter.) She was tall, of course. As I stand six feet in my stockings, it would be positively ridiculous for me to fall in love with a short woman. I've always been in the habit of running from small women, for fear of being caught in the meshes of love's net. But Amelia and I looked extremely well together. In fact, I look pretty well any way you can fix me—that is, with my leg on; and Amelia, as I remarked of her immediately after my proposal, was a perfect model of beauty.

"There was no line, no subtle curve,
No graceful turn to painter known,
That did not her perfection serve,
And I had won her for my own!"

Yes, I had won her, and poor Slympkins was fairly wild with rage. He had sworn to be revenged, but I laughed at his threats. I even sent word to him that Captain Boomerang didn't scare any to speak of; but you see I didn't know then *how* he was going to be revenged.

I saw it now very distinctly, on this the morning of my wedding-day; and I rocked myself to and fro in my chair and groaned, and bedewed that *short* wooden leg with my tears, and I said to myself, in my rage toward Slympkins, that I would enforce the old Mosaic law, and take an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a leg for a leg.

But this would never do for me, to be groaning when there was work to be done. I must prepare for the wedding, for you see I was bound to be married that day, if I had to hop all the way to church.

I was seated at the breakfast table sipping my coffee half an hour afterwards, when Mrs. Brown came rushing in, crying:

"O captain, I know all about it!"

"What, the leg?"

"Yes, I think so. My daughter Eliza says she saw Mr. Slympkins give Sam some money last night."

"Yes, I knew it was Slympkins."

"More than that, Sam was married last night to Miss Seymour's maid, and they went off together on the twelve o'clock train."

"But, my dear woman," said I, "I don't care anything about who he has married, or where he has gone. The question is, has he carried my leg with him?"

"Why, I'm sure I don't know."

"Well, that is just what I want to know, ma'am. This isn't a time for trifling. You must remember that I am to be married to-day, and, by Jove, I want my leg!"

"Why don't you ask Slympkins for it?"

"Yes, and be laughed at. No, I don't intend to let him know anything about the trouble he has caused me. Besides, I don't believe he has got it."

"But what are you going to do?"

"Why, just as soon as I finish my breakfast I shall go to Mr. Seymour's, and tell him of the perfidy of my servant (and I shall take *that* leg to prove my statement), and unless he objects very strongly, I shall persist in being married upon crutches, rather than to have the wedding postponed. *That* would please Slympkins too much. It's what he expects; but I'll disappoint him, by Jove!"

Then I finished my coffee, and going to my chamber I took the ownerless leg, and wrapping it up in paper I came down, and ordering my carriage, rode out to Mr. Seymour's residence.

The old gentleman met me at the door.

He took no notice of my crutches. With averted face he bade me good-morning, and led me into the parlor.

"I'm sorry, Captain Boomerang, very sorry, but the wedding will have to be postponed."

"What, not on my account, I hope;" for you see I thought he had already heard of my loss.

"Amelia is—"

"What! my dear Amelia! O, has anything happened to her? Is she sick?"

"It's nothing serious, my dear captain."

"But is she ill? O, where is she? Let me go to her. Do let me see her!"

"She's in her boudoir. Go; perhaps you can comfort her."

I did go. I burst into the room and found her lying on the sofa.

— "Pale

She lay, her dark eyes flashing through her tears
Like skies that rain and lighten; as a veil
Waved and o'er shading her wan cheek, appears
Her streaming hair."

I rushed forward to clasp her in my arms, but recoiled in surprise and amazement, when I saw upon the chair in front of the lounge upon which she was lying, my—

"Great heavens! Amelia, where did you get my leg?" for you see I recognized the limb instantly.

"The le— O George Henry, I—I—can never be your wife!" she sobbed, fixing her liquid orbs upon the limb before her.

"But where did you get my leg?" I reiterated, at the same time unfolding the paper from the *short* one that I had brought with me.

"Where did you get mine?" she screamed, hopping up from the lounge, and clutching the limb that I still held in my hand.

"Yours?" I gasped.

"Mine!"

"O, this is too much!" I sighed, sinking into a chair.

Amelia sat down, too, and for about two minutes we gazed into one another's faces without speaking a word. At last I spoke:

"O Amelia, Slympkins has played a cruel joke upon us! He bribed your maid and my man to change these limbs."

"Yes; and now—"

"But luckily we have found it out in season, and now the wedding can go on as if nothing had happened."

“What! would you marry me now?”

“Now!” I cried, clasping her to my breast. “I’d marry you now if you hadn’t a leg to stand upon.”

Then I kissed the dear creature, while she laid her beautiful head upon my breast and cried for joy.

In conclusion, I am happy to inform the reader that the wedding took place at precisely two o’clock that day. Slympkins was not there, and I haven’t seen him since; but when I do see him—well, I’ll write you about it.

SNOW BIRD:

—OR,—

WHITE TREACHERY AND RED REVENGE!

BY WILLIAM H. BUSHNELL.

CHAPTER I.

"HOPELESSLY entangled? What nonsense!"

"Then you are looking at the matter from the standpoint that Indian women have none of the usual feelings of their sex?"

"I certainly do not give them credit for much. How could they have?"

"You do them injustice. I have lived among them for many years, and know that they love as deeply as they hate."

"Pshaw! I have seen many deserted since I came here—left by their husbands, if you call such things marriages—and never a single word of complaint."

"And from that you argue want of feeling? If you knew them better, you would see that it is simply the effects of training and their reticent nature. They are literally born to suffer, and because they do not utter loud complainings, as do their white-skinned sisters, is no reason that the arrow may not be as deeply buried in their hearts."

"I cannot think so. Their savage natures are more like stocks and stones."

"You will alter your opinion some day, or I shall be very strangely disappointed. Besides, it is dangerous pastime. Are you not aware that the Indians have followed and murdered—if you choose so harsh a term in their case, when in your own you would call it justice—murdered more than one white man who, they have ascertained, was leaving wife and children?"

"It might have been so once, but they are entirely bowed down and abject now."

"We have not as yet got our feet upon their necks as firmly and securely as we suppose. Your true Indian is never conquered—never will be while life remains. The fires of revenge may burn low and smoulder, but will blaze up and burn brightly when it is the least expected. Here is an old hunter and trapper who has passed his life in association with them. Let us ask him."

The old man paused as his name was called, lowered the butt of his long and heavy rifle upon the ground, clasped his hands over the muzzle, rested his chin upon them, and after having the matter at issue fully explained, looked scrutinizingly from one to the other of the disputants, and replied, slowly:

"Ther kurnal be right. Ther natur of ther red man are pooty much the same as er bar. As long as yer fondle and smooth him ther right way, yer may be pooty sartin of safety. But rub ergin ther grain, and all yer may have done berfore is wiped out just as quick as a flash of lightnin'. Thar's somethin' of the wild cat, tew, in 'em."

"How so?"

"Wal, yer may think yer all right, but ther blessed minit yer take yer eyes off of 'em, they are at yer tooth and nails. Man and boy, I've bin among them fer nigh onter sixty winters, and I know I speak ther truth."

"So do I," answered the elder of the men, and the one whom the trapper had called colonel. "And how about taking a squaw for wife and then deserting her?"

"It ar' cowardly and raskally!" And the face of the honest old man flushed with feeling even to the roots of his white hair. "I've seen it done ergin and ergin, and never knew any good to come on it. And how could thar? It may not be ergin ther laws of the pale-face, but it ar' ergin those of ther good Lord."

"And the Indians often revenge it?"

"Yes, and bitterly. It has bin ther diggin' of ther grave of more'n one likely young hunter I knowed, and I couldn't raise my hand to rervenge his death, because he deserved it. And wouldn't I do ther same thing? Wouldn't you, kurnal? Supposin' some feller should come and steal away ther heart of yer darter, and arter livin' with her fer er year or two, and mayhap havin' children, should try and steal away like a thief in ther night, wouldn't you send er bullet arter him, fer

er dorg, and put an end ter his life-trail? I'd do it ef it war ther very last shot I ever fired." And he again shouldered his rifle and continued upon his way.

"What do you think of such testimony?" asked the colonel, when the trapper had proceeded out of hearing distance.

"Simply that he has lived so long with the Indians that his feelings have become moulded by theirs; and most probably he has or has had a squaw wife."

"You are mistaken in that particular. But I had hoped you would have thought more seriously of what he said, and there is particular reason why you should do so in this case."

"I do not conceive of any."

"Snow Bird was the daughter of a great chief. Her father was accidentally killed while assisting about the fort, and her mother died soon after, it is said of grief. The girl thus doubly orphaned received a sort of *quasi* adoption by our people, even while residing with her own. She has always been cared for by both—been petted by the wives of the officers, educated up to a certain point, and, as you have noticed, her dress partakes of the characteristics of both races, and is strikingly in keeping with her uncommon beauty, for one of such parentage."

"And her skin lighter."

"It was that which caused her to receive her poetic name. And now, my dear boy, I beg of you to give up trying to win her affections. It must certainly result unpleasantly, even if not disastrously, to one or both."

"Well, I'll see." And he walked away whistling.

Colonel Gray but little liked the tenor of the conversation he had had with his lieutenant. He was, however, powerless to do more than advise. Loyd Edwards was a particular friend, even protege of those high in authority, had a "sweet will" of his own, was without parental control, was possessed of means, and claimed the right to do pretty much as he pleased. Certainly his commanding officer had no control over the affairs of his heart as long as they did not conflict with duty. But he had seen with regret that the Indian girl was becoming enraptured of Edwards—knew that there could be but one result to such a misalliance, and had hoped the good sense of the lieutenant would lead him to see the

matter in the right light, and act wisely. It had been a very delicate task for him even to mention the subject; he had done all he could, and nothing remained but to hope for the best.

But Loyd Edwards gave no heed to his colonel's words—nothing for the pronounced opinion of the old trapper, even though he could not deny that he had possessed the best possible opportunities to judge. Deprived of other female society he had sought that of the young squaw, at first merely for pastime, to while away an idle hour, and without a thought of anything serious coming of it. But by degrees he became interested, and at length a feeling that, though not actual love, yet bordered upon it, began to take hold of him, and he resolved to win her—to make her his wife after the heartless fashion of the frontier, never pausing to think that some day (and he could not tell when) he would be transferred to another post, perhaps into civilization, where he would be ashamed to take her.

The conversation he had just held had opened his eyes more fully than ever before upon the subject. But sheltering himself behind the argument that her race were lacking in feeling—that after the departure of their white husbands they took up with an Indian one, and apparently lived on happily as before, he determined to carry out his plans, even then daring to call himself honorable!

He had been upon his way to meet the Indian girl when he had crossed the path of the colonel, and been stopped by him. Now he again resumed his walk, sauntered out of the pickets, and strolled along to the bank of the river, where he knew he would be certain to find Snow Bird waiting for him just before the going down of the sun.

An opening in the bushes revealed her to him, as she sat rocking in her canoe, before she saw him, and he paused for a few moments to watch her movements as she touched the water with her paddle to keep the light bark from drifting downward with the current. Never had she appeared to him so beautiful or graceful as then. Evidently she had dressed herself with exceeding care (as girls will do for their lovers), and having caught many of the arts from the white women she had met at the fort at various times, she had reproduced them with remarkable good taste.

Her dress (as the colonel had said) was hybrid—part savage, part civilized—and set off her tall agile figure to the greatest advantage. It was composed of snowy doeskin and brilliant "squaw cloth," her leggings and moccasins, and the girdle that confined her robes, were elaborately embroidered with glittering wampum, and her intensely black hair had been manipulated with exceeding care, the long braids being interwoven with the crimson feathers of the flamingo and the gorgeous flowers of the Indian pink. Her face lacked the disfiguring marks of the nomad children of the forest and prairie, and her feet and hands were wonderfully *petite* for one who had lived an out-of-door life, and whose limbs and arms were rounded and perfect in their proportions.

Never could there have been found a more attractive picture of still life than was presented to the eyes of the young lieutenant. Everything was in keeping. The silently ebbing river, the softly bending branches, the clear blue sky above, the hushed breath of the wind, the glories of the sinking sun, the scarcely rocking canoe that rested as lightly as a feather on the glassy depths beneath, and the beautiful squaw, with her black eyes brilliant with anticipation, and her red lips just parted so as to reveal the line of regular and white teeth.

For a moment the scene made an impression upon the looker-on, and conscience awoke within him. The picture was one of innocence and unalloyed happiness. The words of the colonel, the earnest ones of the trapper, came with the strength and swiftness of lightning to his brain. He felt that he was acting a part of the most shameful treachery, and he half turned about with the determination of leaving her alone, and in the future weaning her heart from him.

But at that instant she made the discovery of his presence, and the light in her eyes became still brighter, the rich blood flushed the pale bronze of her cheeks, throat and brow, she whirled the canoe towards the bank, held it for him to take a seat within, and in another instant they were gliding down the river—both to meet their fate!

GIVING away entirely to the impulses of the moment, Loyd Edwards made love to the Indian girl far more warmly than he had ever done before. Conscience was entirely crushed, the warnings he had received, the unknown future all ignored. Every thought and feeling was concentrated in the dream of the present, and he was even foolish enough to fancy that it would always be thus, that there would never come a time when he would be ashamed of her whom he was endeavoring to persuade to become his wife.

A few hours previously she would have thrown herself into his arms and gladly yielded to his caresses, have drunk to the very bottom the cup of love that was held to her lips, believing there were no thorns hidden within the glorious roses that fringed the brim. But she, too, had been warned by those of her race and sex who had passed through the dark shadows and trials, and though she did not doubt the affection pledged by Edwards, yet when they were landed, and had seated themselves beyond all prying eyes and keenly listening ears, she questioned as to whether his faith would stand the test of years.

"Will the pale warrior," she asked, in a voice as low and plaintive as the notes of a wood-pigeon, "travel the trail of life with Snow Bird until the Manitou of death calls to one of them?"

"Certainly. What should put other ideas in your head, my pretty bird?" he answered, attempting to circle her waist with his arm and draw her nearer to him.

"His race are not always true. Their tongues are as sweet as the voice of the bluebird after the long moons of ice and snow, when they first talk to the daughters of the red man. But when they grow tired of them they turn their backs upon the wigwams, and the poor wife never sees them again."

"And because one, or even more have done this, is no good reason why all should. There are black-hearted ones among all people."

"And yours is white and unspotted?" Your tongue does not travel a trail so crooked that the serpent's is straight when compared to it?" And she fastened her eyes upon his in a manner that caused him much uneasiness.

He saw in the depths of her own that

other passions beside that of love slumbered there; that soft as they were when in repose, yet it would require little to change the current, and that, if aroused, vindictive and dangerous light would be rayed out—that the doe would change into the tigress, and the little hand be not slow to work out revenge for real or fancied insult or wrong. But he was without fear then, no matter what might happen in the days to come, for his power was almost absolute over her. Concealing, therefore, his true feelings, he answered, gayly:

"You are in a strange mood this evening, Bird. One would think you did not love me."

"Then their thoughts would be as false as the song of the cuckoo," she replied, with marked feeling. "I love you almost better than the good Spirit, and it is this love that makes me tremble for the future. Should I become your wife, and you should leave me—I would die!"

She bent down her head upon the clasped hands that had fallen into her lap, and the shudder that convulsed her frame told how deep and lasting an abiding-place he held within her heart.

Then, encountering but little of resistance, he put his arm around her lithe form, drew her very close to him, and whispered:

"You must not torture yourself, Bird, with things that can never happen. You know I love you, and—"

"Do you?" she questioned, suddenly, raising up her head and again fastening her eyes upon his face.

"If I did not, why should I be here?"

"And when many winters have rolled away, and the little of beauty that belongs to the daughter of the red man has faded, will not your love grow cold?"

"Why should it any more than if I had married a girl from among my own people?"

"Many a one whose skin is like yours is ashamed to own a squaw for wife."

"The more fools they!" he blurted out; for her words were to him as a sharp arrow, and struck the very target of his pride.

"And if the Snow Bird gives to you her heart, and the great chief of the pale-faces should bid you go to another war wigwam, would you take me with you?"

"What else should I do?" he answered,

evasively; and determined not to commit himself by any pledge of the tongue, however much he might do so by acts. Such a strange paradox is what men call honor!

"Even should it be where the villages of his people are large as the prairie, and the fires so many that the smoke clouds the sun? Would he take her with him there, and still be fond and proud of her, and make her happy?"

"There is no probability of such a thing, Bird. Here I am, and here I intend to remain. Very likely I may yet be commandant of the post some day. For more strange things have happened."

"She could see him die," murmured the girl, as if talking to herself, "when the Manitou of war was abroad—die fighting as a warrior should—but if he was to go away and leave me, it would be death."

"Come, Bird, don't let us talk any more upon this dismal subject. Clear the tears from your eyes and sorrow from your face. This is not welcoming me as a girl should her lover."

"Snow Bird would be very happy, but clouds will come to her heart."

"Somebody has been filling your ear with this nonsense."

"There is more than one squaw in the wigwams who has been deserted, and when asked where are the fathers of their children, they cannot tell."

"And they have been talking to you? I wish they would mind their own business. But if you love me as you say you will, give no heed to their croaking. If you do not trust me, you cannot love me."

It was taking an unfair and cowardly advantage, and so unequal a struggle could not last long. His stronger organization, his education and experience in the world, were more than she could cope with, and it was not very long before she yielded to his caresses, and he had brought back a smile to her lips and a light to her eye. It was true that upon subsequent occasions she hinted at the subject, but he instantly quieted her by pretending to be angry; and she buried her fears within her own breast—accepted any burden the future might impose, and gloried in the love of the white-faced warrior, notwithstanding the predictions of evil from her sister squaws and the elders of the tribe.

In due time Edwards and the young squaw were married—if the farce of an

Indian betrothal can be called by so holy a name—married just as he wished. He overruled her desire to have the ceremony performed by the "Medicine of the Soul," as she poetically termed the minister, and taking advantage of his temporary absence from the fort, he bound her to him in a manner that placed neither the fetters of law nor religion upon him. Yet they were strong bonds to her, though to him no more than gossamer.

But he soon found that he had lost caste. Though the other officers were forced by duty to associate with him, their wives were not with his. As a girl, they had tolerated her visits to the fort, even noticed her dark beauty, yet they would none of her society. It was asking altogether too much for them to place one of an inferior and despised race upon an equality—to eat at the same board, to figuratively drink from the same cup, and concealing his chagrin, he made the innocent and trusting Snow Bird believe that it was from choice he had a little cabin erected just outside of the wall of pickets, so as to be more alone with her than was possible in the close quarters of the crowded fort.

"The wife of one warrior," she said, proudly, "has a right in the wigwam where the others sit, even as he has to a place by the council fire."

"That is so, my pretty Bird. But the fact is this: all the rest of the women are jealous of you because you are so much younger and more handsome. Of course you have a right there, and no one would make the slightest objection. And I would take you did I not know you would be much more happy away from the restraint."

The praise of her beauty, the statement that the others were jealous, was a cunning thought, and did very much to quiet her. But in fact she was thinking far more of him than herself—would have revenged such a slight far sooner than one levelled against her own pride, and as he took care to pass every possible hour with her, she accepted the situation, and studied hard to perfect herself in all wifely duties that would tend to his comfort or pleasure.

But the yoke grew more heavy day by day to Loyd Edwards. Long before the usual time of a honeymoon had passed the little of affection he had died out, and he cursed himself for his folly. The glamour.

of the thing had utterly vanished, and nothing but the stern naked reality remained. He saw that he was pitied by his brother officers, and that galled him more than open insult could have possibly done. The latter he might have revenged, the former he was forced to meekly endure. It was consequently with feelings of joy that he listened to the colonel when he proposed an exchange.

"I did all I could, my boy," said the kind-hearted old man, "to save you. Now, for I am not one of the kind who are forever harping upon the past, the only thing is to get out of the scrape as well as you can. I'm sorry for both you and Snow Bird, and we must let her down as gently as possible. The longer you remain the worse it will be for both. If you agree with me, I will give you leave of absence, and you can easily get transferred."

"A thousand thanks, colonel. Great Heaven, what a mad headstrong fool I have been! But how am I to get away?"

"It isn't the most easy thing in the world, for the eyes of Snow Bird are as sharp as those of a lynx, and the entire tribe are watching you. However, I think I can manage it. You must get her accustomed to your absence by degrees, or the poor thing may break her heart. To accomplish this I'll institute a series of scouting expeditions, giving you the command, and when the suspicions of the Indians have become lulled, you can go—but not return. Do you understand?"

"Certainly. But Snow Bird? What is to become of her?" And for perhaps the first time a thrill of pity shot through his heart.

"You have means—can spare her a few hundreds, and I'll issue rations, if necessary, until she can get some Indian husband to keep her supplied in venison and such things. Yes, that is all straight. No, there is one thing more. When you have made up your mind to leave let me know quietly, and I will have the old hunter make one of the party, and guide you in safety to civilization. If you did not have some one like him to take care of you and blind the eyes of the Indians, it wouldn't be very long before your scalp would be hanging in some dirty wigwam."

The plan was carried out. In less than a month the lieutenant and hunter failed to return one evening with the scouting

party (they had gone with them as far as possible), and the trusting Indian wife was deserted.

CHAPTER III.

UNDER the skillful guidance of the old hunter, the fugitive lieutenant (though followed fast and far by the revengeful Indians) reached the settlements in safety.

A few months later he received a letter from his friend the colonel, informing him that Snow Bird, though at first sorrowing deeply for him, had apparently become resigned, and was living in the little cabin he had caused to be erected, in plenty (thanks to the provision he had made for her), and was occupied in weaving baskets and making moccasins, for which she found a ready sale. She had received many offers of marriage (for she was wealthy according to the estimate of the red lovers), but steadily declined them.

This was the last Edwards heard—almost thought of her. He salved his conscience by the recollection of the money and gifts he had caused to be bestowed upon her after his departure, and soon she was entirely blotted out from his life, or remembered dimly as some fantastic dream.

This grew to be still more the case when he received another appointment in a distant part of the country, and which, though upon the frontier, was hundreds of miles away, and in a pleasant village where society was both plenty and gay. Fond of ladies' company, handsome, a dashing soldier, with wealth at his command, he rapidly became a favorite, and many a beauty sighed to captivate the gallant son of Mars.

For a time he appeared content to roam beelike and sip the honey from every flower, and it might have been that the bitter episode of his former life checked his enthusiasm, made him more difficult to please and careful how he became entangled. Yet such an ardent nature could not very long resist the charms of the opposite sex, and he at last loved truthfully and deeply, feeling, if he could have realized the fact, as the poor Indian girl did when she made him the god of her idolatry.

And how different the wooing! It was an entire giving up of self to the fair girl whom he wished to make his wife—an

entire yielding to her wishes, a seeking to please her in all things. It appeared as if the nature of the man had changed, and he trembled when he thought she might never become his own.

It was strange, too, that he won her promise to make him happy under very much the same circumstances as when he had won his forest bride. It was on a similar glorious evening, when they had been sailing upon the waters of the upper Mississippi, listening to the sweet singing of the wild birds, and watching the dying sunrays as they tinged leaf, and flower, and wave, with glories of crimson, and gold, and purple.

There was, indeed, very much to remind him of his former love-making, and as he clasped the blushing girl to his breast, as she whispered the dearest sweetest word that ever comes to the ears of man, he thought he saw a dark, sorrowful, and yet revengeful face peeping out at him from the bushes, and he could scarcely control himself. But it must have been simply the working of a diseased imagination. Yet the girl noticed the slight tremor that agitated his frame, the sudden pallor of cheek and brow, and asked, almost tearfully:

"What is the matter, Loyd?"

"No—nothing," he stammered, becoming crimson as swiftly as he had pale. "It is nothing but a slight spasm of the heart."

His words were far more truthful than he had any idea of, for it was a poetical (even if nothing more) retribution for what he had caused another and a true heart to suffer.

"Nothing but a slight heart spasm," he repeated. "It is over—entirely gone now."

"O, your looks terrified me so much!" And the newly-awakened love trembled for the future.

"Think no more of it, my darling."

"But if you should be lost to me?"

"No fears on that account." And his light though forced laugh did very much to reassure her. "And now, my dear Bessie, what can I do—what say to thank you for the promise you have just given me, for your love?"

Ah! you who have already passed through the honeyed scenes of betrothal—you who have not, some day will know of the scene that followed—one even too sa-

cred for mortal eyes, one that should be seen alone by the angels!

They were very happy when they returned homeward in the soft moonlight, very happy during the few weeks that preceded the wedding, very happy when the marriage fetters had been riveted. And so were the months that followed. The young and beautiful wife had no fears save that her husband might be called away to the dangerous and stirring scenes of war. Yet that was a scarcely to be seen speck in the distance. White-winged peace was brooding over the entire length and breadth of the land, and there was nothing to sully or bid defiance to stripe or star. And her husband was even more happy, and contented, and blessed, if such a thing could be, than she. His dream was realized to the full. Everything of earthly bliss appeared to be his portion—there was nothing left to crave. Yes—one thing.

When the forests were again clothed in their brilliant robes, when autumn had come trailing its garments over the earth edged with crimson and fretted with fire, then came also the last longing of his heart, a bright-eyed babe, and his cup of happiness was filled and running over. It was another bond that drew the husband and wife still more closely together, and their united affection was concentrated on their beautiful boy.

The months passed fleet-footed to them. They never tired of watching the growth of their child, his little intelligent face, his sweet baby ways, and weaving for him a brilliant future. With the physique of his father, and the beauty of his mother, though a thought more pronounced, as became his sex, with the dark liquid eyes of the one, and the soft curling hair of the other, he gave promise of making such a man as they might indeed be proud of, especially as nothing would remain undone as regarded mental training.

The months faded into a year—another and still another, and at three the child showed clearly those traits that would be the governing ones at a riper age, and entwined himself still more closely around the parental hearts. Then he indeed became their idol (no other child having stepped between), and asleep or awake was ever an object of solicitude and tenderness.

"If anything should happen to our boy,"

said the fond mother, as they sat together after he had been put to bed, and was sleeping such sleep and dreaming such pure dreams as never come to us again after we have turned our backs upon childhood and its innocent pleasures, "I believe it would kill me."

"What can happen, Bessie," he asked, "save the ordinary ills to which all humanity is heir? And against them he shall be more than guarded."

"Nothing that I am aware of, and yet I sometimes feel as if the shadow of a dark future was hanging over him—as if he was to be torn from our sheltering arms."

"It is only your excessive mother-love that prompts such dismal feelings. You are nervous on the subject, though I presume that is natural. There is but one accident that can come to him—"

"And that is death! May God long keep him from it," she replied, with a shudder.

"Amen to that, with all my heart."

It was when spring was just entering into summer, and the south wind lured them to sit with open windows and without a light; the moon and stars gave a sufficiency, and they enjoyed the twilight from which they had long been forbidden by the harsh blasts of winter. But more than once the mother had started from the side of her husband to see that her darling was slumbering undisturbed. The slightest noise summoned her to his little bedside, pale with anxiety, and with a wildly fluttering heart.

"It would appear, wife," said Edwards, as she returned after one of the periodical visits, "as if you divined coming evil."

"I do not know—cannot tell," she replied, laying her hand softly upon his arm, "what is the matter with me to-night. Every sound startles me. I do not remember to ever have been so before."

"Are you ill?" And he looked with the eyes of earnest affection into her face.

"No, only nervous. There! Did you hear that?"

"It is nothing but the fluttering of the curtains at the window. I think the wind is rising."

"But our darling? I fancied I heard a sob."

"You must control your feelings, or you will in reality be ill, Bessie. Come, sit down and try and banish such idle thoughts from your mind."

She complied with his request, and by light and agreeable conversation he endeavored to calm her. But it was some time before he could do so. The keenly vibrating strings of a mother's heart are not easily set at rest. By degrees, however, he succeeded, and after an hour the burden was lifted from her soul, and she could almost smile at her recent timidity.

"You were right, Loyd," she said, when the subject was mentioned again. "What could happen to our dear boy?"

Bold words, but they instantly quickened again her fears. She slid gently from her husband's embracing arm, and hurried into the adjoining room—was gone but an instant, and then her wild agonized shriek rang through the house.

"O my God, he is gone—some one has stolen him!"

With a face like death her husband sprang to her side, though not in time to catch her as she fell fainting to the floor. Scarcely knowing what he did, he lighted a lamp and called for assistance. The coverings of the bed were found thrown back, the place the little sleeper had occupied cold, proving that his removal had been accomplished some time previously.

A little scrap of paper caught the eyes of

the wretched father; he glanced at it, thrust it into his bosom, and no one ever heard from his lips the words that had been traced upon it by an unskilled and uneducated hand, but they were forevermore burned upon his brain and heart. They told him the terrible secret that he had a son also born to him in the wilderness, that it was dead, that the living one had been stolen to take its place, and would be trained to utterly hate, despise, and leave no stone unturned to avenge the wrongs of Snow Bird upon the pale-faces!

Time and other children dried the tears and brought something of comfort to the heart of the at first distracted white mother. Of the fate of her firstborn she never knew. The father could never gain the slightest clue to it, though his search continued for many years. But when he was growing old, he heard from hunters who came from far away that the most desperate, revengeful and bloodthirsty of all the Indian chieftains they met had a white skin, dark eyes, and curling hair—heard and knew (ay, and carried the skeleton around in his heart to the day of his death) *that it was his son*, and that the wrongs he had inflicted upon Snow Bird had been most bitterly avenged!

SNOW-BOUND.**BY LOUISE DUPEE.**

LIGHTS were beginning to blink over our little prairie town, and as the darkness grew deeper the storm arose almost to a whirlwind. It had been snowing steadily all day, until all out of doors was as white as Sleep's Island in the old fairy book, and had been as silent, too, but now the wind was awake and tearing about in mad fury. Boughs were torn from the quaking trees, fences creaked, windows rattled, and the doors shook as if some giant were pounding thereon for admittance. The Creek farmers who had been to the village for groceries were having a sorry journey home through the great drifts, and our hired man Sam, who had been to carry Miss Fettyplace the dressmaker home, came back with one of his ears frozen.

It was time for the six o'clock train, and I was watching for it with my face close to the frosty window-pane. The station was only a little way down the street, and the

arrival of the evening train was the great event of the day to both Dell and me, for it was the regular train from New York, and brought a breath of the world we used to know into those barren Western fields.

"I think it's doubtful if the train gets through to-night," said Aunt Polly, whose brisk knitting-needles glistened like silver in the firelight.

"If it does reach' here, I reckon it will stop a while," said Elvira, the maid of all work, who was bustling about in preparation for supper. "The drifts is blockin' up everything; it's the dreadfulest night I ever seed, and Sam's awful with his ear, though he's bound to go to the station. I wonder what there is so perfectly bewitchin' about the station. Mary Bates wont be at the post-office anyway, though she'd get there if she could, I'll warrant; Mary Bates is what the station usually means with Sam."

"O dear, I hope the train will come in, it's so dreary!" said L. "I wish it would bring a visitor to you and me, Dell."

Dell looked up from her meditations with surprise.

"Who should come to see us, child? You know we have no friends," she said, with a little sigh.

"Whose fault is it?" was on my lips to say; but I pressed the words back, and was silent, for because of a certain suspicion I cherished, I was very tender of Dell's feelings. Poor Dell! what a sweet patience was growing over her proud bright face! But was it not her fault that we had no friends? When papa died, and we, who had been rich all our lives, were obliged to recognize the astounding fact that we had not even a shelter for our heads, she insisted on hiding from her "dear five hundred friends," and came out here to Aunt Polly without so much as saying good-bye to them. I was but a schoolgirl then, and had no voice in the matter, and followed her leading as a matter of course, but I did not like the proceeding.

"All the world is so heartless," said she, bitterly, showing me a heap of dainty perfumed notes. "This is consolation indeed!" And she read the cold carefully written words with a tone of the sharpest sarcasm.

To be sure there was more elegance than kindness in these rose-colored affairs of condolence, but still kind hearts might have dictated them, and Dell would never have swept them into the fire with such scornful bitterness, if there had not been something far more unendurable than this loss of wealth stirring in her heart. I guessed all then, but not all as it was. There had been something more than friendship between my beautiful sister in her days of belleship and Fred Winthrop, the oldest scion of the oldest and most aristocratic family in town, and now, in her misfortune, he had deserted her. They—the Winthrops—were by no means rich, and it was evident that Mr. Fred, with his artistic tastes and his idle fine-gentleman habits, must marry money. I was full of the schoolgirl love of romance, and before I thought of "my own story," was studying my sister's affairs with the greatest eagerness. Fred Winthrop had been a sort of hero of mine. He was so handsome, had such a noble highbred air,

and his manner to Dell was perfect, like that of a lover in a very nice book. He made no ostentatious parade of his devotion, but we could see it in his every look.

When he spoke to her he seemed unconsciously to take another tone, and I was sure when I looked into his frank brown eyes that he was really in love with her, and after a long and rigid examination of Dell's looks and behaviour, was satisfied that the course of true love would be likely to run smooth in this case. But it seems that I was mistaken, after all, though what had impeded its progress I could hardly tell. Was it possible that my hero could forsake his lady-love because she had lost her fortune? However it was, I was almost sure that Dell regretted him still, and that she was thinking of him when she was so silent over her work those long winter evenings.

The train did not come, and, tired of waiting for it, I rushed to the piano, and after a rattle and tumble over the keys, which made Dell wince, struck up the first song that came into my head: "What's a' the Steer, Kimmer?" "Jamie has landed, and soon he will be here," I sang over and over again, until from my perch on the piano stool I saw red lights flashing under the hill, and knew, by the bustle and commotion without, that the train was at last nearing the depot.

"We're goin' to have company, sure," said Elvira, putting her head in at the door. "I just dropped a fork, and it stood right straight up in the floor. That's allers a sure sign of company over our way!"

"Well," said Aunt Polly, laughing, "I guess we wont wait tea for company. I'm getting hungry."

"Better," said Elvira. "They're sure to come."

And no sooner than the words were out of her mouth, Sam appeared in a state of great excitement.

"Can you 'commodate four or five passengers to-night, Miss Caswell?" said he, addressing Aunt Polly. "Train's got stuck—can't go no further. Jenks is full, and so's the squire and the minister, and the squire told me to ask you if you could 'commodate a few."

"There," said Elvira, clapping her hands triumphantly, "didn't I tell you so, Miss Caswell? If you drop a fork and it

sticks up in the floor, it's a sure sign of company."

"Why yes, of course," said Aunt Polly, in answer to Sam. "There are two spare beds, and there's the lounge in the sitting-room; that is comfortable as a bed. Do you know how many there are to be provided for, Sam?"

"No," said Sam; "but the squire asked me if I s'posed you could take four or five. There's one sleepin' car on, and some of 'em 'll stay in that, I s'pose."

"Well, you'd better go back at once, and say that they can come."

And Sam departed with great alacrity to harness Billy into the double sleigh, for, as he said, "If there were any winnemen folks to come, they'd have so many traps that nobody could take care of 'em afoot," though it was only a very little ways from the depot to our house.

Elvira, in a state of supreme delight, fell to cooking desperately. To feed people was her forte. Aunt Polly, who was the soul of hospitality, brightened the fire, brought out stores of preserves and honey, and pulled all the rocking-chairs in the house into the cosy sitting-room, and, almost as delighted as Elvira at the prospect of having strangers about to break the monotony of the white winter's storm, I made a bouquet of the scarlet flowers and glossy leaves of my geraniums to grace the table, and danced about like a child till I heard the sleighbells. Even Dell had a look of pleased expectancy, and puss washed her face as she never had washed it before.

"I wonder who they will be?" said I. "Probably a trio of cattle-drivers on their way to St. Paul, and a fat old lady who has been to see 'my son' in Chicago, and is on her way home to Spruceville with her head full of wonders."

Dell was laughing at my vivid imagination, when there was a great bustle at the door, and it was evident that the "passengers," as Sam called them, had come, whoever they were. Aunt Polly had on her best cap, and received the strangers as politely and cordially as she would have received her own minister. I peeped at them from the dining-room, and reported to Dell. My trio of cattle-drivers faded into thin air.

"There is a young man from New York—elegant," said I, "though I have only

seen his back, a middle-aged gentleman from Chicago with his daughter, who has been to boarding-school. His face is red, and I *think* he is a pork-merchant. Then there's a funny little old gentleman, Deacon Somebody of Vermont, who is talking pathetically about Providence to Aunt Polly, and has never strayed as far before from his own dooryard. He's from New England, I'm sure. And that's all there are."

Dell took a peep for herself, but turned away from the door with a wild scared face that bewildered me, but in a breath I understood it all. The elegant young gentleman had turned his head, and, wonderful to relate, the elegant young gentleman was no other than Dell's old lover, Fred Winthrop! I could hardly believe my own senses, and stood staring at him in a perfect maze, till, coming to take a chair near the door, he espied me, and looking as surprised as I, came to speak to me. I was ashamed to be caught standing in the door to survey people in that way, but there was no chance to retreat, and really delighted to see him, I gave him my hand, and murmured a few words of welcome.

"Is it possible that you are really Loue Travers?" said he—"Miss Loue I suppose I must call you now you are such a tall young lady? And so you are snow-bound, too. I did not see you on the train."

"O no indeed!" said I; "or, at least, no more snow-bound than we are usually here in the winter. This prairie is famous for snow."

I was embarrassed, and so was he, and I was glad that Dell had escaped into the kitchen.

"And you live here!" he exclaimed, looking unutterable surprise.

"Yes," I said; "we had lived there since papa died with a relation of his, who had kindly invited us to share her home."

He muttered something about its being so far away, and then mentioned my sister, his face growing a shade paler as he did so, I was sure.

Dell was there, and very well, I said. Then the teabell rang, and I went in search of the above-mentioned young lady, wondering if she would come to the table under the circumstances.

But when I entered the dining-room she was already there, beside Aunt Polly, helping to pour the tea with the greatest com-

posure possible. I watched the meeting with Mr. Winthrop with great anxiety, but she greeted him coolly and quietly, like an old half-forgotten acquaintance. He flushed, and seemed agitated, and was so absent-minded that he could not be made to notice Aunt Polly when she handed him his tea, and the little old gentleman, who sat next to him, was obliged to reach it from her hands and put it beside his plate. Whereupon, the boarding-school young lady looked toward me for sympathy in an ill-suppressed giggle.

"We have met Mr. Winthrop before in New York," explained Dell to Aunt Polly. And after that the conversation became general, and we had quite a merry meal of it.

Mr. Risley, the pork-merchant (he was a pork-merchant, but he was from Cleveland instead of Chicago) was very jolly and entertaining. Miss Molly Risley, his daughter, I found quite a congenial spirit, though I thought her gay dress and profusion of jewelry dreadfully vulgar, at best, and unspeakably dreadful for a travelling costume. Mr. Furbush, the little old gentleman, a Methodist minister from New Hampshire—didn't I guess *nearly* right, after all?—enlisted all Aunt Polly's sympathies because he was dyspeptic, and could not eat hot biscuit, and her greatest approval because he praised her Graham bread, which she ate and advocated herself, but which was held in much disfavor by the other members of the family.

"My wife, the late Mrs. Furbush, used to make bread *almost* as good," said he, pathetically, and in a confidential tone, to his hostess. "She was an excellent woman, madam—an excellent woman!"

Miss Risley and I exchanged amused glances across the table, and were making rapid strides toward friendship.

Mr. Risley was inclined to talk politics, but Mr. Furbush and Mr. Winthrop were not; then he tried women's rights, and found Aunt Polly too sharp for an opponent, so he was forced to let his conversation melt into less solid topics—the latest murders, the money market, etc. Miss Risley and I were impatient to leave the table and go where we might find greater scope for intimacy, and both Dell and Mr. Winthrop had quite lost their appetites, though they laughed a great deal.

After tea, amid the bustle of moving

chairs and getting back into the sitting-room again, Mr. Winthrop bent over Dell, and I heard him say something about being cruel, in a very low tone. Dell's face was as scarlet as my geraniums, and when the party were at last gathered about the sitting-room fire, those two were missing. Afterwards I discovered that he had begged her to give him one word in private, and they had remained in the front hall, where the mercury was below zero a good part of the evening. I don't think any one missed them but Miss Risley and me, for Aunt Polly was absorbed in a conversation with Mr. Furbush, and Mr. Risley seemed more than contented, though half asleep, in his armchair in front of the merry blaze of the wood fire. Miss Risley missed them, I knew, for she was a girl, and thought he was perfectly splendid, of course.

"Did you know Mr. Winthrop very well in New York?" she asked me, after a little thoughtful silence. And after I had satisfied her on this point, she seemed quite resigned to his and my sister's absence, though she knew that they were together somewhere as well as I did.

It was a short and merry evening, though the storm was, if possible, more terrific outside, and the windows were getting to be quite covered with drifts on the north side of the house. Aunt Polly produced some of the reddest of her harvest apples, and an abundance of sparkling currant wine of her own manufacture. Mr. Winthrop and Dell reappeared in due time, both looking quite radiant. Indeed, I had not seen such a color on Dell's cheeks, such a light in her eyes, since we left New York. Mr. Risley grew very merry, and told stories over the wine; even Mr. Furbush lost a shade or two of his melancholy, though in praising the pungent beverage to Aunt Polly, he made more pathetic allusions to the late Mrs. Furbush. She, too, had made currant wine. And we all fell to making jests with each other as if we had all been old friends. Miss Risley and I were extremely intimate before the evening was over. We were Mollie and Loue to each other in less than an hour, and each poured into the sympathetic ear of the other all the wonderful experiences she had ever met with, and the storm received our highest commendation for having blown so furiously and spilled such

heaps of snow, else two such congenial souls might never have met. She had a brother, older than herself, that I must see some day; she knew we would like each other so much, and he was nice—very nice, she thought, and we both hoped the storm would continue for days and days since pleasant weather would part her and me.

Ah, that was a wonderful snowstorm indeed—the very breath of fate! Little did either Dell or I dream what it would blow to us when we watched it grow over the pale blue sky of the early morning!

When I went up stairs at half-past ten I met Dell in the hall, who seized me with both arms and drew me into her room.

“O child, I’m so happy!” said she, half smothering me with kisses. “Do you know Frederic has cared for me all this time, and has suffered as much as I have from the separation? But it was all my fault, and I don’t deserve such happiness at all. We had a little lovers’ quarrel, you know, dear. We *were* lovers, though he had never asked me in so many words to marry him, and we had not made it up when papa died and we lost our fortune. Then, in my foolish pride because he did not come to see me at once, I refused to see him when he did come, and left New York without giving him any clue to my whereabouts. And to think I have blamed him so for nothing! For he could not have come to see me on those dreadful first days; he was away from the city, and as soon as he heard of it he came home. But he is so good, so noble, Loue! I am not half worthy of him!”

I could only return her kisses silently, for I was almost crying, and ran away to find Aunt Polly; for I knew that the wonderful news had not been communicated to her.

She was warming blankets for Mr. Furbush’s bed over the kitchen fire. Dell was her pet, and I thought that she would be as much overjoyed at her good fortune as I was myself; but she was not so enthusiastic as I wished her to be. Indeed, I never knew Aunt Polly to be so absent-minded in my life, and she forgot all about Dell in a moment to say something about Mr. Furbush! She *did* ask how Mr. Winthrop happened to be in that part of the world, however, and if he hadn’t some idea that he was on Dell’s track, after all—a question which had not occurred to me before.

I found out afterwards that he had business in St. Paul, and was on his way thither. He was working very hard in these days, Dell said.

Well, the storm cleared away at last, and left the skies as blue as winter skies could be, but for two days and two nights it roared and drifted about the earth. No such storm had been known for years and years. That the road was somewhere between the straggling line of village houses everybody knew, but no sign of a road was visible. The drifts made little mountains which only the sunbeams could cross, and from our house to the store they were obliged to dig a tunnel under them to travel in. What a wonderful, white, silent way it was! It seemed to me as if the world never appeared so merry as it did after that storm. Everybody and everything bustled out of it as they would have from too long a sleep into a cheery morning. The roosters thought it was spring, and crowed their clearest and lustiest, and the whole air was alive with merry voices. People opened their windows and gave their neighbors greeting over the snow, and the shovellers sang at their work all day long.

Our guests were with us for more than a week, and we were sorry enough to part with them then. The train left on the evening of the third day, but Mr. Risley had taken cold and didn’t care to expose himself just then, and Mollie did not wish to leave me for another week. Mr. Furbush seemed quite domesticated in Aunt Polly’s armchair, and did not once speak of taking his departure, and Mr. Winthrop was waiting for Dell to be ready to go with him, for he never was going to travel without her any more.

The storm commenced on Tuesday, and on Saturday my sister was a bride. She would not listen to Mr. Winthrop’s proposition of taking her away so soon at first, but he insisted, and at last she yielded, and such a merry wedding as we had in our bright little parlor! Mr. Furbush married them—he was a dear soft-hearted old soul, in spite of his faculty for melancholy—and Mr. Risley gave the bride away. Aunt Polly looked almost as young as the fair bride herself, in a cap more amazing than I had fancied even her amazing store to possess. Mollie curled her hair for the occasion, in despair because she could not

honor it with braver attire than a traveling-dress, and Elvira, really subdued by her satisfaction in the never-ending cookery and bustle, could only predict another wedding in less than a year every moment or so. The first time it was one wedding, and at last she foresaw three. At one time, because when she was sewing on a gown of Dell's, the thread knotted so she could do nothing with it; that was a sign there would be a wedding before the gown was worn out. Then nearly all the nuts at the wedding dinner happened to have double kernels; that was a sign of another wedding within a year. And I slipped when I went to kiss the bride; that was a sure sign I should be married in a year's time, anyway. I was relieved to think that something as subtle as fate had to do with this awkwardness on my part.

Before I took leave of Mollie I promised to visit her in the spring at her home in Cleveland. I did so, of course, and I *did* like her brother very much, though he was a pork-merchant as well as his father, and I have reason to believe that he liked me, for he asked me to marry him before my visit was over.

One year from the night of the beginning of that memorable snowstorm, all the party which were assembled under our little Western roof then, with the exception of

Sam and Elvira, were gathered in Dell's drawing-room in New York, and there was one added to the group, Mr. Tom Risley, quite an important addition to myself. Both Aunt Polly and Mr. Furbush, and Tom and I, were doing our wedding tour, and Mr. and Mrs. Winthrop were entertaining us royally in the dear old house where Dell and I were born. All our thoughts and all our gossip went back to "the year that's awa'."

"Where is the third wedding predicted by the sage prophetess Elvira?" said Fred, turning to Mr. Risley, who had been a widower many years.

"Ah!" said Mr. Furbush, solemnly, "the prophetess prophesied of herself. One week ago she was united in the holy bonds of matrimony to Mr. Samuel Storer. I had the pleasure of presiding at the ceremony, and Mr. and Mrs. Storer are now keeping house for us during our absence."

"Elvira married to Sam!" I exclaimed. "But where is Miry Bates, and how does she reconcile herself to his red hair?"

"I don't know," said Aunt Polly, "but I never heard one sharp word between them after that snowstorm. There was something magical in that wind, I do believe." And she looked at Mr. Furbush and actually blushed. Aunt Polly is nearly sixty years old!

SOMEBODY'S FORTUNE.

BY MISS CAMILLA WILLIAN.

WE had done everything that we could think of to make the time pass happily to us in our nest among the hills. We had climbed every mountain of the gigantic ring that shut us in, we had dived into every dell, we had viewed every waterfall, traced every path, fished in every brook, sat on every lover's seat; we had wandered about the valley by moonlight, promenaded on the veranda of our hotel, danced, sung, flirted, told stories, read, slept, sulked, eaten, drunk—O! I don't know a thing which we had not done, except one. We hadn't had our fortunes told.

And now the time of our departure was near at hand. September had come, the trees were putting on scarlet and gold, the air had got a frosty sting, and we began to find our dresses and wrappings too thin. Moreover, the city, which we had shrunk from in August, which had seemed to us the embodiment of dust, heat, noise and desolation, now assumed to our minds' eyes quite other characteristics. O, the bright, broad pavement, the gay crowds, the play, the church, the concert, the *shopping*.

Still, the country held us a little with its gorgeous beauty, and, like a *passe* and half-discarded mistress, painted herself with carmine and powdered herself with gold to entice us yet a little longer.

"One week, then we will go," was the agreement. "One week; and let it be a jolly one."

Reader, did you ever say, or hear any one else say that "Let us be jolly," and observe at once that a wet blanket seemed to have descended on the company? The gods give merriment, and we must take it as it comes. If we reach to snatch it, they withhold. So it was with us. No sooner did we propose to crown our rich draught of the summer with a week all bubble, than everything became stale, flat and unprofitable. The lovers all got out with each other, the unengaged persons all took colds in their heads, mosquitos came suddenly, unannounced, and in one night made us look as if we had highly pronounced cases of the measles, and, to cap the climax, the store of Java coffee which our host had laid in for the summer gave out,

and we were reduced to Rio, fit only for tobacco-chewers.

I think that the nucleus of all these troubles was plain to every eye. If Professor Cranston and Althea Dorman had not turned the cold shoulder on each other, none of the ills which we deplored would have come upon us. They had been the life of the party all summer. Looking back, we could see that under their happy piloting we had gone over greater rocks and reefs than those we now stuck fast on. In June, July or August, we would have laughed at mosquito-bites, we would have made a merry trip to the nearest town for coffee, we would have mediated between the lovers and reconciled them, and we would so affectionately have dosed the invalids that they would have enjoyed the sickness so much, nothing but gratitude would have induced them to get well. Now, the sunshine withdrawn, our clouds were clouds, damp and chill, and no longer rosy mists.

We were disappointed about the professor and Althea. After all the ladies had tried to get the professor, and failed, and all the gentlemen had tried to get Althea, and failed, we all, with one consent, gave them to each other, and our blessing into the bargain. How lovely was her smile and her brightening face to him! How charming it was to see her frank preference, with its faint tinge of shyness! How we liked our cavaliers to see the model admirer in one who delighted to do his lady honor, who wasn't afraid to present his flowers to her in the face of everybody, who asked for her when she was missing, and greeted her with joy when she came. Evidently there had been no love talked between them. But when they had returned to the city, and each felt the restraints of conventional life closing between them, we knew that he would break through that silence, dash aside the barrier, take her to greater nearness than ever, and that she would not say him nay.

Now the dish was upset. By what slight nothing, by what word, glance or act, or what omission of word, glance or act, we knew not, they were drifting apart. Althea professed herself weary of the country, but

determined to stay the allotted time, if she had to sleep through it. The professor took a sudden interest in geology, went about clipping rocks, and smoked unlimited cigars. Not cigars alone; he smoked a pipe, at which Althea put her handkerchief over her nose and withdrew as far as possible from his vicinity. Seeing the motion, the professor frowned like a thundercloud, refilled his pipe, and strode off to smoke it in the woods.

"I'll tell you what I think started it," Bertie Lynn whispered to me, drawing her shawl closer, and wiping her little red nose, which was nearly wiped away already. She was one of those who had a cold.

"Do you recollect John Morton saying weeks ago that Professor Cranston thought the German ladies excelled the American ladies in modesty. They always waited to be sought, the professor said. Althea hasn't been the same since then. And it was only the next day she said before us all that she did not approve of mixing nationalities, and thought it better an American girl should marry an American."

Professor Cranston had a German mother, was born in Germany, and had lived there till he was near twenty-five years old. He was now but thirty-two.

While we spoke Althea entered the parlor. She was a graceful creature, not very beautiful, but had beautiful moods, and she was as sweet as a flower, both body and soul of her. But the rose has its thorns, and Althea had a little defensive armor, a backbone to her sweetness. She wore this thorn in sight now, and she wore the rose too, a lovely bloom in each cheek, and on lip as well. But it was an uneasy brightness, and seemed to come from excitement rather than pleasure. I called her to us and she came, smiling, and ready, and chatted almost as usual, quite as brightly and wittily, scarcely as softly. Her manner now was to her former ways as a well-done wax flower is to the real one.

I looked at her while we talked, and the sight pained me. It seemed to me that her heart was bleeding into her cheeks. I could guess the pain and tenderness that were stirring there, hidden as much as her pride could hide them.

While we talked, Professor Cranston came strolling along the piazza outside the sunny window in which we stood. I knew by a slight chilling of Althea's manner that she caught the first sound of his step.

Glancing out at him, I saw that he had

got back his summer face—almost. The blackness was gone from his brows, his blue eyes were bright and alert, the corners of his mouth had softened, and, instead of walking with the erect, soldierly stiffness which had lately distinguished his movements, his step was light and elastic again.

Some people think that the most fiery natures are those which belong to people of dark eyes and hair. Perhaps that may be true in the majority of cases; but I have known the most ardent and impulsive souls imprisoned in those fair-haired, blue-eyed beings who have so little color about them that they look almost tame, when quenched, or quiescent.

As I looked at the professor now, I thought that his soul might be a flame, not burning steadily, but wavering in the breath of a strong emotion, on the point of consuming and sweeping his body out of sight on the instant. It seemed likely that there would be a scene at once.

But I had miscalculated the man's self-control. There was a flicker, then in an instant all became calm, only that the frown and the stern mouth did not come back. Instead of them was a latent softness in the mouth that was almost a smile, and a light in the eyes that were downcast as if to hide it.

Just before he came within range of the vision of Althea, who stood a little back from the window, she turned carelessly away, and began walking down the room, turning slowly round and round to the tune she was humming, her white dress and scarlet mantle floating out gracefully, her small feet just visible, her lovely face appearing and disappearing, her whole being seeming wrapped away in that self-ensphering motion. She was as completely isolated from us as if she were miles away.

The professor leaned in the window, and looked after her with love-lighted eyes, watching her slow, graceful motion till she had waltzed herself out of the room. Then he said, with smiling coolness, "Miss Dorman is a perfect waltzer. One does not often see such slow grace. Most ladies are too rapid and jerking."

"Thank you!" said I, dryly.

"O!" said the professor, looking at me deprecatingly, "I know you never waltz. But your *walk* is not walking, it is floating."

"Thank you!" I said again, not dryly this time.

The professor was a very agreeable man.

"I have come to say good-by for twenty-four hours," he said. "I am going down to Cameron. Will you make my compliments to Miss Dorman and the others? I am off this minute. Good-by!"

The stage was at the door while he spoke, and he went to get into it. Althea came back into the room, her face a little startled. Evidently she had heard the good-by, or caught a glimpse of him through the open hall-door.

"The professor is going down to Cameron for a day," I made haste to explain; "and since you turned your back on him, he asked us to make his compliments for him. Come and wave your handkerchief after the coach. He is looking back."

"I've got my handkerchief around my throat," said Althea carelessly, not coming near the window, but turning away toward the piano.

The afternoon passed rather dully. Nobody felt in tune, and the absence of one was felt for all. Althea alone tried to be gay; but I could see that she was on the point of breaking down. I caught a quiver in her lip which she turned away her face to hide, and an occasional fixed and yearning gaze, as if her heart was far away.

The evening came on, and we all sulked in various holes and corners, as unsocial as bears.

"I do wish that somebody would propose something," said I, snappishly. "What is the use of people staying here if they will not make themselves agreeable!"

"I don't think that you are setting a very agreeable example," retorted John Morton from his tilted back chair out on the piazza.

I hated John Morton.

"Speak when you're spoken to," says I.

Somebody came gliding toward me in the shadowy room, sank on the cushion at my feet, and laid her forehead in my hands.

"How your head aches, dear!" I said, tenderly.

"Yes!" whispered Althea.

After a little while our landlord, Mr. Grant, came in. "Ladies and gentlemen," he began through the darkness, addressing his audience by faith rather than by sight, "there's an Indian fortune-teller out in the garden. If any of you would like to have your fortunes told, he will do it for a quarter apiece."

"O, coot!" said Bertie Lynn, whose cold, ever on the increase, had shut off about half

the consonants for her. "That's subthig to kill tibe. I'll have bide tode. Does he ever tell adythig true, Bister Grat?"

"He's been telling the servants," the landlord replied, "and they all say that he knows everything about 'em."

John Morton got up and stretched his lazy length. "I'll make a sacrifice of myself," he said, "and go first. 'If he tells anything worth hearing, the rest can go. Where is he, Grant?"

"He is sitting in the chair just under that great willow," was the reply. "You are to go to him one by one, and say 'I have come to know the future.' You mustn't laugh, or he will be angry."

"Is he safe?" I asked. "Shouldn't we be afraid of him?"

"O no! I think not," the landlord replied. "The Indians about here are always harmless. They wouldn't dare to do any hurt. Besides, he is near the house."

John Morton pulled his hat over his forehead, and strode down to the great willow that hung like a green fountain over the sward, pushed aside its drooping branches, and disappeared. We all waited in silence till he came back. "He is worth a quarter," was his comment. "You go next, Bertie."

"To you thig it's safe?" asked Bertie, growing more stuffed every moment.

"Perfectly so!" says John, and sat down on the window-sill at the elbow of my chair. I gave my shoulder a hitch, and attended to Althea.

Bertie fussed a little, then went. Presently she came back, and entered the room without saying a word. But instead of taking her former seat by the old bachelor Grimes, she sat by herself near another window.

"Who's to go next, Bertie?" asked John Morton, leaning into the room, bracing himself on the arm of my chair. "Each one must name his or her successor."

"Well," said Bertie hesitatingly, and in a soft voice dropped almost to a whisper, "Blister Sobes bite go."

Bertie hadn't spoken to Mr. Somes for three days.

He got up from a sofa in the farthest Plutonian darkness of a corner, and came toward the open long window, on his way stopping to drop a shawl into Bertie's lap. "You ought to keep that on," he said gently.

She obediently put it on, and he went out:

As he stepped out the window by us, I started, and had nearly made an exclamation;

for in the shadow of his going somebody had kissed my hand.

I snatched it away, and bent over Althea.

"Are you going?" I asked.

"Yes," she whispered; "but I won't trust myself alone to him. We will go out together, and when you have had yours told, you come out and slip round to the other side of the tree while I go in. I am a coward, you know."

"But I shall hear your fortune," I said in a whisper.

"You may," she replied. "I don't care."

"Where there's whispering, there's always something said," remarked John Morton.

I didn't condescend to answer. I was too angry with him for his impudence, and too much astonished also. We hadn't been very good friends lately, and for more than a week he had not come to sit by my chair as to-night.

"Are you angry?" he asked, in the very lowest of whispers; and, before I was aware of his intention, put his hand to my cheek, and felt the indignant blush that in the darkness he could not see.

"Come, Althea," I said, starting up abruptly, seeing Mr. *Somes* returning.

He came in, named me as his successor, then went to sit beside Bertie. Really, it seemed that the coming of the fortune-teller had had a reconciling effect.

"You go first," said Althea, "and I will stand a little way off in front. When you are through call out to me, and as I come in you seem to slip away, but go to the other side of the tree. I'm a simpleton, of course; but I can't help it."

I pushed aside the branches, and stepped into the green tent they made, dropping them behind me. It was very dark then, only light enough to show a large Indian seated in the garden chair, his blanket wrapped about him, his hat on, his face turned toward me.

"Who's that outside?" he demanded, harshly.

"A friend of mine," I replied. "She is to come in next, and is waiting her turn."

"I don't want any one to listen," he said.

"She isn't listening," I answered. "She can't hear where she is."

"Are you afraid?" asked the savage, in a still harsher voice.

"Indeed not!" I replied, almost angrily.

"You wouldn't dare say a word to displease me. There are a score of men within call."

He laughed a little under his breath, then

asked more gently, "And your friend out there, is she afraid?"

"You can ask her when she comes," I replied. "Now I want my fortune told."

"I must take your hand," said the Indian, gruffly.

I gave it to him.

What great, lazy scamps those Indians are! Doing nothing more manly than basket-making, and letting their wives wait on them. This man's long, slim hands were as soft as mine, though there was an intimation of a power in them to grip.

He took my finger-tips in his hand, then passed the tips of his right fingers softly over the open palm.

"You are rich, you are proud, you write much, you love and hate much, you like to go off alone much, then be in a crowd, you like to do as you please, and you like to have a man with blue eyes and broad shoulders at your feet. When you get him there again, don't set your foot on him. He's too good, and he loves you. He likes to appear ugly, because you are ugly to him; but he loves you. He will soon tell you so."

"What else?" I asked, after a moment.

"Nothing else," was the curt reply.

"Am I going to be famous? Am I going to have a set of diamonds? Am I going to marry a titled foreigner and have all the American folks breaking their backs bowing to me? Am I—"

"You are going to be loved all your life, and that is enough for any woman," was the reply, but not harshly given.

"I don't call it much of a fortune for a quarter," I said.

"Send that other girl in," said the Indian, roughly.

I called Althea, and as she came in, squeezing my hand in passing, I slipped around the large clustered trunks of the tree and hid there where I could hear every word.

"You are too proud," the fortune-teller said, in a voice that had softened wonderfully. "He whom you love loves you truly, deeply, and you make him unhappy. If anything was reported to you which you didn't like, it was not meant for you. He loves the ground you walk on. O my love—"

I started up from where I crouched, at the same instant that Althea uttered a faint cry.

"Professor Cranston! This masquerade—"

"What will not love attempt?" said the fortune-teller, throwing his blanket at my feet. "O Althea!—"

I stole away, but Althea didn't follow. Here was a pretty plot indeed!

Instead of going into the house, I turned off down a garden path. A heavy step came striding after me.

"What did he tell you?" asked John Mor. on at my elbow.

"A mess of trash," I answered. "Professor Cranston doesn't understand fortune-telling."

"Who said he did?" asked John, in a tone of surprise.

"Nobody. But I say he doesn't," I replied shortly.

"What has Professor Cranston to do with it?" queried John, in apparent astonishment.

"What are you talking about?"

"Don't you know, John?" I asked, facing him.

"On my honor I don't," he answered. "Do tell me what you mean."

"Let's go into the house," I said, turning back.

"No," said John, unceremoniously taking me by the arm. "Bertie and Len Somes are courting in the parlor, Sallie Brent and James Marshall are courting on the piazza, and—"

"No matter," I interrupted. "They needn't stop for me."

"And you and I are going to do our—"

Well, no matter about the rest of John's impudence. Come to think of it, I'm not the heroine of this story; Althea is.

I think that girl never made her appearance till eleven o'clock, and then she went through the hall and up stairs without speaking to any one.

The next morning the professor appeared at the breakfast-table. He had come back sooner than he expected to, he said with per-

fect gravity. But Althea glanced at me, and blushed crimson.

"How long did you stop?" she whispered, as we got up from the table.

"Long enough to know where you got that ring you wear," I answered, glancing at a sparkling diamond on her left fore-finger.

She smiled, but said nothing, saw nothing, though I had been holding my hand before my face for some minutes.

"I like my ring best," I remarked, disgusted at her stupidity.

She stared, looked at my hand, then laughed.

"You darling creature, I'm so glad!" she said, putting her arm around my waist.

"Althea," said the professor's voice behind us, "do you wish to go down to the dell, or up the mountain this morning?"

"Either," she said softly, then blushed when we both laughed.

"Professor," I said, "I forgive you all your insults of last evening. In return, confess that you overheard Bertie telling me why Althea was angry with you."

"What is it about me?" asked Bertie, coming up.

"I confess!" said the professor, laughing. "That blessed Bertie put me on the right track. Miss Lynn, I am forever your debtor."

"O! brovezzer," said Bertie, "I be dot sure dat I wat any bad to be forever iddedded to be. You bay saddle wid Adthea. Adthea, bake hib pay cobpound idterest."

"Come, Bertie!" called a voice outside the window.

"I be cubbid," said Bertie, blushing, and wiping her nose; or, as she would have said, "wipid 'er dose."



ST. ROBERT'S CAVE.

BY M. ALBERT.

ST. ROBERT was a native of York, England, and "the hermit"—so the story goes, who had spent some years in the monasteries of Fountains and Whitby; and afterwards was abbot of New Minster, and a contemporary of King John, who gave him forty acres of land in Swinescot—was so delighted therewith that he set to work and fashioned out this cave; and here, with his books as his only companions, the pious hermit made his home.

In the year 1745, this cave was the scene of a murder, one of the strangest that ever occurred—the murder of Daniel Clark by Eugene Aram. In this place Clark and Aram had secreted goods and plate of which they had conspired to defraud their neighbors, and when in this cave they met to divide their stolen property, Clark was murdered and buried by Aram. A short time after the tragedy, Aram left that part of the country, and for nearly thirteen years was usher in a school at Lynn, in Norfolk.

A period of several years passed away, and the people of Knaresborough continued to wonder at the sudden and mysterious disappearance of Clark; but in time their wondering ceased, for accident brought the crime to light. A laborer at work in a

neighboring quarry found a skeleton, and it was at once supposed that it might be that of Clark. A coroner was summoned, and the wife of Aram, who resided in the town and had long been deserted by her husband, was rigidly examined. Her evidence threw some suspicion on an accomplice named Houseman, who, in his confession, implicated Aram, and he was apprehended, and brought to York Castle, where he was tried and convicted. It is asserted that the evidence against him was extremely deficient—furnished almost entirely by an accomplice, and so scanty and suspicious, that a man tried upon it at the present day would unquestionably have escaped conviction. At the conclusion of his trial, Aram confessed his guilt. He delivered a defence so admirable for its ingenuity, so replete with erudition and antiquarian knowledge, that it astonished the whole court. He attempted to prevent his execution by suicide, and succeeded so far as to be brought to the scaffold in a state bordering upon insensibility. There were many at the time who doubted the guilt of Aram, but his confession, of course, set that matter at rest; and if Aram's tale be true, it was his wife that urged him to the commission of the crime.

Aram was a self-taught man, and his devotion to learning was the one absorbing passion of his life. According to his own account, drawn up at the request of the clergyman who attended him after his condemnation, he was born at Ramsgill, a little village in Netherdale, 1704. At the age of sixteen he went to Newby; and "it was here," he says, "that my propensity for literature first appeared; for being always of a solitary disposition and fond of books, I enjoyed here all the repose and opportunity I could wish. My study at that time was engaged in the mathematics; I know not what my acquisitions were, but I am certain that my application was at once unwearied and intense."

At one time it was the intention that Aram should be sent to London, but the idea was abandoned, and he remained in the country, and soon began his career as a teacher, and in time took to himself a wife. This last step Aram ever regretted. He says, "*The misconduct of my wife which that place afforded once has procured me this place, this prosecution, this infamy, this sentence.*" Though married, he applied himself diligently to the acquisition of knowledge, and turned his attention to the classics. He read all the Latin classics, then went to the Greek Testament, and afterwards mastered Hesiod, Homer, Theocritus, Herodotus, Thucydides, and all the Greek tragedians. He also took up the study of botany; and one of his schemes was the formation of a comparative lexicon. He made preparations for that purpose, investigated the Celtic as far as possible, in all its dialects, made comparisons between that and the English, the Latin, the Greek, and even the Hebrew. He made notes, and compared above three thousand of these together. But this was all; the dream was to remain a dream; punishment was tracking, though tardily, the steps of the criminal, and at last brought him to the prison and gallows, instead of a niche in the temple of fame.

It is strange that such a man should have committed a murder. If he did it for gold, it must have been because he looked upon gold as a means to an end, which justified

the means, though they were robbery and murder. In the same way a priest in Spain, wholly absorbed in learning, confessed that, being debarred by extreme poverty from prosecuting his favorite study, he had allowed himself to believe that it would be admissible to rob a very dissolute, worthless man if he applied the money to the acquisition of knowledge. Aram must have reasoned in a somewhat similar manner; and yet that such a man should commit a murder is a mystery which cannot be solved by any ordinary principles of human nature—a mystery which can only be solved when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed.

The life of Eugene Aram has furnished materials for numerous tales of fiction; and it has formed, as drama and as novel, a subject for Sir Bulwer Lytton's artistic pen. St. Robert may be forgotten, but Aram will live, for genius has immortalized his name. The reader of Hood will remember the picture of the usher:

"Who sat remote from all,
A melancholy man.
His hat was off—his vest apart,
To catch heaven's blessed breeze;
For a burning thought was in his look,
And his bosom ill at ease:
So he leaned his head upon his hand and read
The book between his knees;

"Leaf after leaf he turned it o'er,
Nor ever glanced aside,
For the peace of his soul he read that book,
In the golden eventide.
Much study had made him very lean,
And pale and leaden-eyed.

"At last he shut the ponderous tome;
With a fast and fervent grasp,
He strained the dusky covers close,
And fixed the brazen hasp.
'O God, could I so close my mind,
And clasp it with a hasp!'"

All this Aram must have felt—at times more than this must have fired his wildly throbbing brain; for our crimes walk with us as shadows, weighing down the soul, obscuring every ray of hope, blotting out the very aim of life, rendering all dark and dreary.

